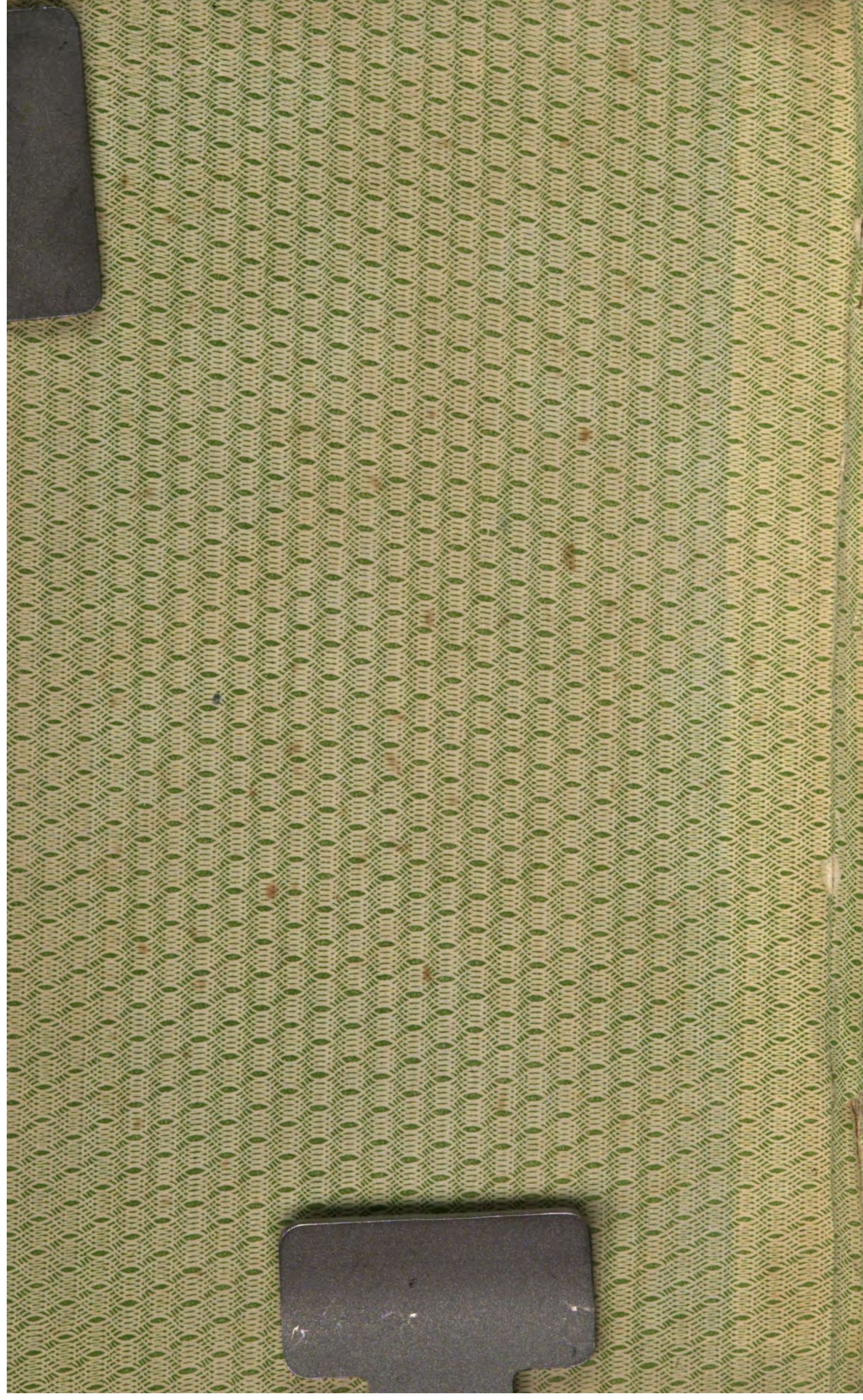










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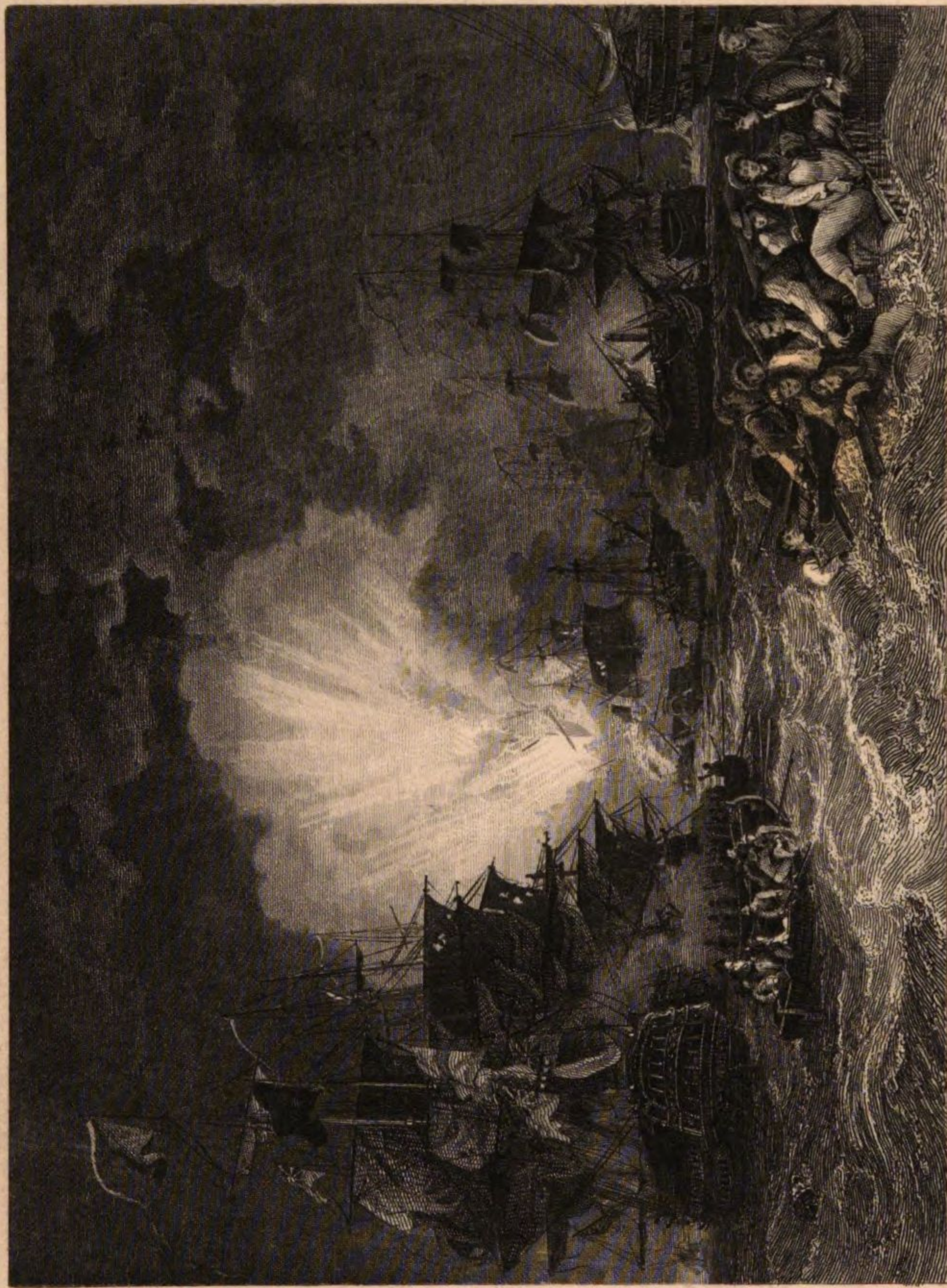
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*Dr. Louchardet del. R. A. del.*

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# BATTLE OF THE NILE.



# HISTORY OF ENGLAND,

BY

HUME AND MACAULEY,

WITH

A CONTINUATION

BY

THE REV. T. S. HUGHES, M.A.

VOL. XXII.

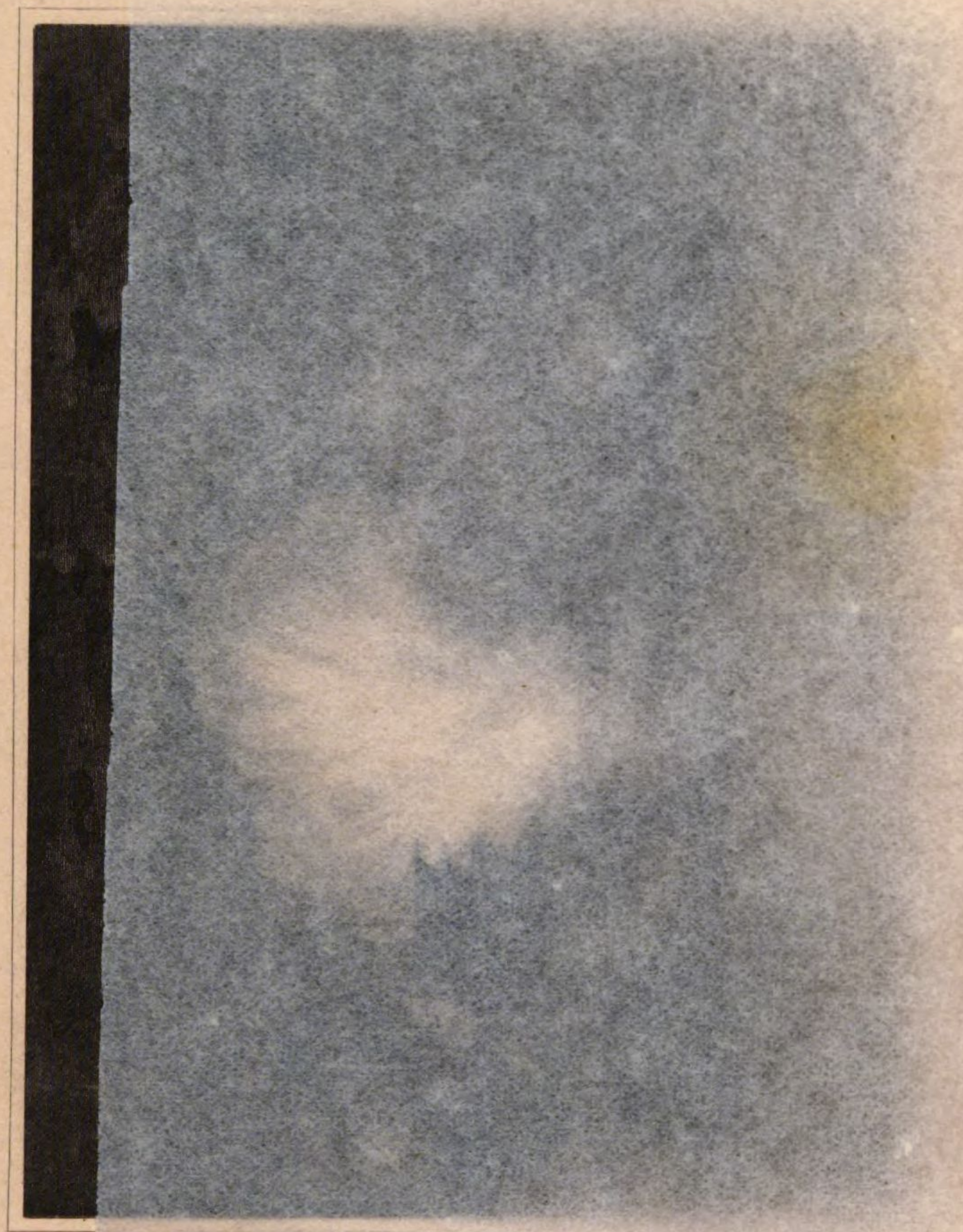


*Depicted by Rogers*  
*Death of Tipu Sultan*  
1800:

A. J. VALPY, M.A.

1835.







# HISTORY OF ENGLAND,

BY

HUME AND SMOLLETT;

WITH

*A CONTINUATION*

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*Death of Tipu Sultan.*

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THE

**HISTORY OF ENGLAND,**

BY

THE REV. T. S. HUGHES, B. D.

FROM THE DEATH OF GEORGE THE SECOND IN 1760.

**With Historical Illustrations and Portraits.**

A. D. 1786 to A. D. 1794.



THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND  
FROM THE END OF THE SEVENTEENTH  
CENTURY TO THE PRESENT TIME

CHAPTER I  
THE STATE OF THE NATION  
AT THE END OF THE SEVENTEENTH  
CENTURY  
The state of the nation at the end of the  
seventeenth century was one of great  
prosperity and power. The country was  
rich in resources, and the people were  
industrious and enterprising. The  
government was strong and efficient,  
and the laws were well administered.  
The country was at peace, and the  
people were content with their lot.  
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great glory and honor.

General Pitt's measures for the  
improvement of the country  
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Yours faithfully,  
[Signature]

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# THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

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## CHAP. XXIX.

GEORGE III. (CONTINUED.)—1786.

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PARLIAMENT met on the twenty-fourth of January after a tranquil interval of a few months, during which the flourishing state of British trade, together with the announced project of Mr. Pitt to reduce the public debt by a sinking fund, had raised the three per cent consols to seventy: so great was the confidence reposed by the mercantile and monied interests in the talents and integrity of the new chancellor of the exchequer.

In the speech from the throne, his majesty declared to the house of commons his earnest wish to enforce economy in every department of the state, while he expressed great satis-



faction at the prosperous condition of our affairs, in the extension of trade, the improvement of revenue, and the increase of public credit; relying on their continued zeal and industry for the farther advancement of these important interests: he recommended to their attention the maintenance of our naval power on the most respectable footing; and, above all, a fixed plan for the reduction of the national debt, for which the improved state of the finances afforded such facilities. The topics of this speech, and the corresponding address, offered but little opportunity for animadversion to the opposition: Mr. Fox, therefore, being excluded from the field of domestic policy, expatiated widely over that of our foreign relations; and attempted to prove, that the accession of his majesty to the Germanic confederation, as elector of Hanover, would disgust the emperor, and indispose him to an alliance with Great Britain in case of any future war. Having reviewed the interests and relations of the various continental states, he deduced from them certain principles of alliance which seemed most expedient for this country to adopt. From the intimate connexion existing between France and Spain, he thought that Austria was the only power, whose co-operation with us, by imposing on France the necessity of continental exertions, could prevent her from again making such extraordinary efforts by sea as had astonished Europe during the last war: he adverted to a favorable opportunity for an alliance with Russia that had been lost; and in alluding to the report of a treaty about to be established between Great Britain and France, he strongly reprobated the policy of such a measure; appealing to the experience of past ages for a proof that England had always prospered in proportion as she had relinquished her commercial connexions with that country. After making some strictures on the Irish propositions and the India bill, he concluded a speech, which, according to the parliamentary tactics of opposition on the first day of session, exhibited a copious statement of implied errors and miscarriages in administration.

Mr. Pitt, in the introductory observations of his reply, exposed his antagonist's mode of attack, by observing, that he dexterously left out of discussion such parts of a subject as did not suit his purpose, while he introduced those that might be favorable to it, however foreign they were to the question: at the same time he declared his intention, to which in the course of their parliamentary warfare he generally adhered, that let Mr. Fox range ever so widely into extraneous matters, he should confine his answers to what he conceived applicable to the



question at issue. Mr. Fox's plan had frequently succeeded with lord North; who, being inferior to his antagonist, naturally followed where he chose to lead: but Mr. Pitt was of a totally different cast and character; disciplined by reflection, and powerful in talents, he could take his own ground, and maintain it in any mode which he judged expedient: he was, therefore, not to be hurried away by the evolutions of an adversary: in the present debate, he observed, various topics had been introduced which were not under the control of the house, or not sufficiently advanced to admit of discussion: objections therefore were improper in the one case, and premature in the other. Mr. Fox replied, by putting his observations in a new light, without advancing any thing new in argument; and no general debate ensuing, the address was carried without a division.

Nothing remarkable occurred in the house before the middle of February, when Mr. Pitt called its attention to a plan, which originated with the duke of Richmond, to fortify the dockyards of Portsmouth and Plymouth. That nobleman had viewed with alarm the danger impending over those important arsenals during the late war; from which, as he thought, accident only had preserved them, when the naval armaments of our enemies menaced the coasts; and having paid particular attention to gunnery and fortification, he became anxious, from the time he presided over the board of ordnance, to employ those sciences in aid of our national defence. In the preceding session this scheme had been introduced to the notice of the commons, who expressed themselves unwilling to vote the money of their constituents for its execution until made acquainted with the opinions of persons qualified to decide on the utility of such a measure: it was accordingly referred to a board of military and naval officers, whose report was now stated to be highly favorable, though containing matters of too serious and delicate a nature to lay before the house.

The discontent and surprise manifested when the question was previously under discussion, now rose into great warmth and indignation; for it was said, 'if the report, or the essential matters contained therein, were not to be inspected, the house stood exactly in the same situation as before the appointment of the board: they must still decide, not on their own judgment, but on the authority of others. It was well known that the expense of this new system would be enormous; and it was their duty, before they adopted it, to be fully convinced of its propriety.' Besides, general Burgoyne, and some others, con-



troverted the alleged unanimity of the board. 'The case had been hypothetically put to them ; and it was only on admission of the hypothesis that they gave an opinion respecting the utility of the plan : it remained to be ascertained, whether the case thus hypothetically put, namely, the absence of the fleet, or its inability to protect the places in question, came sufficiently within the limits of probability to deserve attention. Several of the naval officers had explicitly declared fortifications to be unnecessary ; and a majority of the military men did not recommend them in the present state of the country : they merely assented to their alleged necessity, if the country afforded no other means of defence ; and this limited acquiescence was interpreted by the master-general of the ordnance into an approbation of his plan.'

Mr. Pitt waived all farther discussion of this question for the present ; but after a short time he brought it more specifically before the house in a regular motion, 'to provide effectually for the dockyards of Portsmouth and Plymouth by a permanent system of fortification, as essential to the safety of the state.'

A vehement debate arose, in which it was contended by one party, that, according to the confession of the board, neither naval nor military force could afford to our dockyards such protection as their importance demanded, without the aid of fortifications : the present plan was recommended as most applicable ; as capable of being manned by the smallest force ; and requiring the least expense : such works, it was said, would give a much larger range of action to our fleets, by leaving them so far unfettered ; while they would also tend to reduce the standing army, and permit a greater number of forces to act at a distance in case of invasion.

These arguments were not left uncontroverted by the other party ; but the speaker who most distinguished himself was Mr. Sheridan, a parliamentary orator now rising fast to fame and political importance. On the present occasion, he exhibited the substance of all the reasoning that could be urged against the scheme, which, he contended, was in itself and its consequences both dangerous and unconstitutional. 'These strongholds,' said he, 'maintained by numerous and disciplined garrisons, will afford tenfold means of curbing and subduing the country more than would arise from doubling the present army establishment. Can any one imagine that the system now recommended will end with Portsmouth and Plymouth ? May we not figure to ourselves the same board of



officers, acting under the same instructions, and deliberating with the same data, while they take a circuit round our coasts? The reasons which justify this measure in the present instance, will apply to every port in the kingdom which is sufficiently important to require defence. But the whole plan proceeds on two suppositions extremely improbable; first, that we shall be so inferior on our own seas as to permit an enemy to land; secondly, that if they do land, they will choose to attack the only places which we have fortified: if fortifications are to be our defence, there must be a circle of fortresses round our shores; but the safety of England rests on the courage and enterprise of our people, not on ramparts and fortifications. But after all,' said Mr. Sheridan, 'the plan is unauthorised by the report of the board: the opinion of naval officers has been withheld; but the opinion of military officers is founded on hypothetical and conditional suggestions, and on such data as were proposed to them; for the truth or probability of which they invariably refused to make themselves responsible.' In this part of his speech the orator ingeniously played with the terms of the act in question, and diversified his course of reasoning with an interspersion of wit at the expense of the master-general. 'The noble duke,' said he, 'deserves the highest praise for the striking proofs he has given of his genius as an engineer, which appear in the planning and constructing of the report in question: the professional ability of the master-general shines as conspicuously there as it could on our coasts: he has made it an argument of posts, and conducted his reasoning on the principles of trigonometry, as well as logic: there are certain detached data, like advanced works, to keep the enemy at a distance from the main object of debate: strong provisions cover the flanks of his assertions; and his very queries are in casemates: no impression, therefore, is to be made on this fortress of sophistry by desultory observations; but it is necessary to sit down before it, and assail it by regular approaches. It is fortunate, however, that, notwithstanding all the skill employed by the noble and literary engineer, his mode of defence on paper is open to the same objection which has been urged against his other fortifications; that if his adversary gets possession of one of his posts, it becomes strength against him, and the means of subduing his whole line of argument.'

On this occasion the minister found himself deserted by many of his adherents, and by the independent interest generally, who were adverse to the present measure: none of his



arguments, though enforced with all his powers of eloquence, could at this time overcome the prejudices conceived against fortifications. On a division, the numbers were exactly equal, 169 on each side; and the speaker gained considerable credit by giving his casting vote against the resolution. Mr. Pitt greatly lamented this failure; being of opinion, that the measure might, in the event of war, have been of essential service to the nation.

One of the most striking features in Mr. Pitt's financial policy remains to be noticed; that is, the establishment of an efficient sinking fund for the redemption of the national debt. Such a fund as this had been formed in the year 1716, by Sir Robert Walpole; but was afterwards so often diverted from its original destination, both by that minister and his successors in office, that when Mr. Pitt was placed at the head of the treasury, the constant practice was to apply it wholly to the ways and means of the current year. This alienation of the sinking fund was the more to be lamented; because, though at first it amounted to only half a million, it was greatly increased soon after its establishment, and again at subsequent periods, in consequence of a progressive reduction of the interest of the national debt.

Through the misappropriation of this fund, the diminution of the debt, which went on very rapidly during war, became so slow in time of peace, that from its first establishment in 1716 to the present time, £200,000,000 had been borrowed during twenty-five years of war, and less than £22,000,000 paid off in forty-five years of peace; so that the national debt had arisen, at the end of the American contest, to such a height, as to form a subject of great anxiety and alarm: the general impression was, that the funding system could not be carried beyond a certain extent; and it was apprehended that we were approaching that limit, the transgression of which might involve us in all the untried evils of a national bankruptcy: new loans might be demanded by a new war; and to suffer the debt to remain in its present state was to invite aggression. The commissioners of public accounts declared that 'the evil admitted not of procrastination, palliation, or expedients; it pressed onwards, and must be met with force and firmness, or serious consequences would ensue;' and the means by which so desirable a purpose as that of prevention might be best accomplished, had long occupied the thoughts of speculative persons.

Mr. Pitt, having announced his intention of submitting to



parliament a proposal on this subject, received an incredible number of schemes and projects ; and after weighing every suggestion to which any regard seemed due, as well as applying the most anxious attention of his fertile mind to the subject ; he felt convinced that no method could be devised so little liable to danger and objection as the simple plan of purchasing stock at the market price on behalf of the public, accompanied with the strongest provisions and guards possible, to render the fund so applied unalienable, and to secure its increase at compound interest.<sup>1</sup> These provisions indeed, and this power of increase, were the new and distinguishing features in his plan, from which its great utility was derived.

As a preparatory step, therefore, on the seventh of March, Mr. Pitt moved for the appointment of a select committee of nine persons, of which Mr. William Grenville was chairman, for the purpose of reporting on the state of the public revenue and expenditure ; the result of which inquiry being laid before the house on the twenty-first, proved highly satisfactory. The amount of the revenue for the current year was estimated at £15,397,000 ; while the permanent expenditure, including the civil list and the interest payable on the various funds, amounted to £10,554,000 : the peace establishment, allowing 18,000 men for the navy, and the usual complement of seventy regiments, exclusive of life-guards and cavalry, was estimated at £3,924,000 ; in all £14,478,000 : consequently, there remained a surplus of more than £900,000, applicable to the diminution of the national debt : but as the fund for that purpose ought to be a million, Mr. Pitt proposed to move in this committee such taxes<sup>2</sup> as would produce £100,000 per annum ; which sum, he was happy to say, could be raised without any material pressure on the public. He observed, that although £14,478,000 was calculated to be the annual expenditure, some time must elapse before it could be reduced to that sum. We had but just emerged from a ruinous and expensive war ; and many of its burdens did not end with it : nevertheless, they ought not to be considered as forming part of our annual expenditure ; for they must cease after a short time.

On the other hand, there were sums appropriated during the war to various services, which had not been expended ; and

<sup>1</sup> Tomline, vol. ii. p. 143.

<sup>2</sup> These were an additional duty on spirits, a modification of the tax on foreign timber, and taxes on perfumery and hair powder.



£450,000 had already been paid into the exchequer on this account: immense arrears also remained in the hands of former paymasters; and there was a balance of £600,000 due to government from the East India company. When to this were added the improvements that might yet be made by judicious regulations in the different branches of the revenue, he thought he was not too sanguine in affirming that we possessed resources equal to all our ordinary and extraordinary demands. The proposition, therefore, which he now submitted to the house, was, that the annual sum of one million be appropriated unalienably to the liquidation of the national debt: also, that the same should be vested in the hands of commissioners, to be by them expended quarterly in the purchase of stock; so that no sum should ever lie within the grasp, sufficiently large to tempt any one to violate this sacred deposit. The interests, annually discharged, were to be added to, and incorporated with, the original fund; so that it would operate with an accelerated velocity: the fund was also to be assisted by the annuities granted for different terms, which would from time to time fall in, within the period of twenty-eight years; at the expiration of which, Mr. Pitt calculated that his sinking fund would produce an income of four millions per annum; while it would have liquidated 100 millions of the three per cents: the parliament of that day might then decide whether the fund should still go on increasing at compound interest. The commissioners to be nominated under this act, were the speaker of the house of commons, the chancellor of the exchequer, the master of the rolls, the governor and deputy-governor of the bank of England, and the accomptant-general of the high court of chancery; persons of such rank and distinction, that they would be secured from all suspicion in the discharge of their important duties. Mr. Pitt concluded his speech, by congratulating himself that he had a task to perform so different from that of his predecessors; and that instead of expending the public money, he had the good fortune of being able to propose a diminution of the national burdens.

The only amendment of any material consequence suggested on this plan was offered by Mr. Fox, 'that whenever a new loan should be made, the commissioners might be empowered to accept such proportion of it, as should be equal to the cash then in their hands; the interest and *douceur* annexed to which should be applied to the purposes of the sinking fund:' at the same time, he expressed high approbation of the bill, and



added, that he hoped this agreement between Mr. Pitt and himself 'would be a good precept, and an example for posterity to follow.' The amendment thus proposed was readily and candidly accepted by Mr. Pitt, who joined heartily in Mr. Fox's concluding wish; and expressed his singular satisfaction in having that gentleman's concurrence in the bill itself: it passed both houses without a dissentient voice; and on the twenty-sixth of May his majesty gave the royal assent to it in person. Thus did the minister, who at his entrance into office found an annual deficiency of several millions in the revenue, contrive in two years not only to render it equal to the expenditure, but to afford a surplus of a million for the reduction of the debt; and this sum he applied in a manner so simple and efficacious, as to extort from all parties the most unqualified approbation. Wise and salutary, however, as the measure appeared at the time, human foresight could never have anticipated its beneficial effects on this country, by the support which it gave to public credit.

In subordination to his great plan of financial reform, Mr. Pitt now turned his attention to the immense frauds committed on the revenue in the article of wine; these he corrected, by transferring the greater part of the duties from the customs to the excise; and making those, on what were called sweets, with which foreign wines were adulterated, equal to the duties on wine itself. This measure he effected, after six divisions in the house of commons, against all the efforts of Mr. Fox to render it unpopular, and the obstruction given to it by those who were engaged in the trade; as well as others, who urged the difficulty of applying the excise laws to wine, and the impolicy of extending those laws beyond their present limits. But the principles of commerce and taxation were better understood now, than they were in the days of Sir Robert Walpole; while the public felt convinced that the state of our revenue required the adoption of every measure tending to its improvement. The value of Mr. Fox's objections to the beneficial reforms which his powerful antagonist was now making in the financial system, may be estimated from his own acknowledgement, that he had never read the great work of Adam Smith 'On the Wealth of Nations,' and the observations which he addressed to the gentleman who has recorded this confession. 'There is something,' said he, 'in all these subjects, which surpasses my comprehension; something so



wide, that I could never embrace them myself, nor find any one who did.' <sup>3</sup>

The next beneficial measure which Mr. Pitt carried through parliament, had a reference to frauds committed on the customs, by false accounts of imported goods, and the re-landing clandestinely such as had received bounties or drawbacks at their exportation. To prevent these injurious practices, he brought in, what was called 'the manifest act;' which ordered that no articles should be imported into Great Britain before the master of the vessel had delivered to the custom-house officer a manifest, stating the place where they were laden, with a full description of them verified on oath; also, that no vessel should sail from any British port, till the master had given a bond of £200, that he would not re-land any part of its cargo illegally; also, that no goods, entitled to bounty or drawback, should be put on board for exportation, except by persons duly licensed for that purpose. Towards the end of the session, this active minister applied himself to ascertain whether the crown lands could not be rendered more productive; and for this purpose he moved in the house of commons for the appointment of commissioners to inquire into the state of woods, forests, and land revenues belonging to the crown, as well as to sell or alienate fee-farm and other unimprovable rents: this measure, though opposed in the house of lords, was ultimately carried.

The sale of tea at the India-house, had, in consequence of the commutation tax, and the preventive measures taken against smuggling, increased from five and a half to fourteen millions of pounds; which enlarged trade, added to some other circumstances, induced the company to apply to parliament for an act empowering them to make an addition to their funds: a petition to this effect was offered to the house of commons on the twenty-fifth of May, when it appeared that the sum of two millions was requisite: Mr. Pitt accordingly proposed that the company should be enabled to add £800,000 to the capital of their stock, which at the present price would produce £1,200,000; and also to sell a surplus of £36,000 a year, received from the exchequer, over and above the annuities which they paid to their creditors, which would produce £800,000. The bill, giving these powers to

<sup>3</sup> Butler's Reminiscences, p. 178.



the company, passed after several debates in both houses, and one division in that of the lords.

From what Mr. Pitt had said in the debate on the king's speech, it seemed as if he did not then think of bringing forward any measure in the present session relative to India: but intelligence from thence, and a mature consideration of the subject afterwards, urged him to suggest certain improvements on the plan adopted in 1784: a bill, therefore, for that purpose was prepared and introduced into the house by Mr. Dundas in March. This, among other regulations, conferred on the governor-general the privilege of acting, in cases of high importance, without the consent of the other members of council; and it enabled the directors, if they should deem it expedient, to unite the offices of commander in chief and governor-general in the same person; in consequence of which, earl Cornwallis, who had borne so conspicuous a part in the American war, and whose character stood very high in public estimation, was nominated to fill that important situation. The present bill proposed also to render, not only the present, but the former servants of the company, whether resident in India or not, capable of being appointed to seats in the respective councils; to empower the governors of presidencies to nominate temporary successors to members of council who might die, or vacate their office: it altered a clause in the former bill, which compelled the servants of the company to rise by regular gradation; and repealed that which required from them a disclosure of their property on oath: it also made several changes in the court of judicature, and mode of trial for the commission of crimes and misdemeanors in India. This measure was strongly objected to by Mr. Fox, as well as by Mr. Burke; and, at the suggestion of Mr. Sheridan, it was divided into two bills; in order that the provisions which related to the government in India, and those regarding the court of judicature in England, being distinct subjects, might be separately discussed. On the first point, it was contended, that to authorise the governor-general to act independently of his council, was to establish arbitrary power: but Mr. Dundas fully answered all objections on this score; observing, in the course of his argument, that 'all the mischiefs and misfortunes, which had for years taken place in India, had in his opinion arisen wholly from the party principles of members in the different councils, and the factious scenes which those councils had almost uniformly presented. The person entrusted with the administration of the country would be now invested with



more power; but he would on that account have greater responsibility.' The other clauses were separately attacked and defended; and though the provisions of the second bill were not specifically objected to, the members in opposition repeated their invectives against those who deprived persons accused of misconduct in India, of a trial by jury, 'that unalienable birthright of every British subject:' but their attempts to excite discontent were ineffectual; and the two bills, after several debates and divisions, passed both houses, and received the royal assent.

The only important business remaining to be noticed in the present session of parliament, relates to the preparatory steps taken for the impeachment of Warren Hastings. In May, 1776, the court of directors, in consequence of complaints from India, and at the suggestion of lord North, had voted for his recall from the government of that country; but this vote was overruled by a court of proprietors: not long afterwards, Mr. Hastings authorised two friends to tender his resignation to the directors, by whom it was accepted, and Mr. Wheeler appointed to succeed him; but, on the return of those gentlemen to Calcutta, the governor-general denied that he had given them any such authority, and continued in his government; to which he was three times re-appointed during lord North's administration. Several of the resolutions proposed by Mr. Dundas, as chairman of the secret committee in 1782, conveyed a strong censure on Mr. Hastings; and one of them stated, that 'he had in sundry instances acted contrary to the honor and policy of this nation; bringing thereby great calamities on India, as well as enormous expenses on the company; so that it became the duty of the directors to pursue every legal and effectual method to remove him from his office.' They accordingly voted his recall, but the court of proprietors again interposed its authority; and as parliament took no farther step, he kept his station till February, 1785; when, without any previous notice, he set sail for England.

On his arrival, in June following, the directors voted him thanks for his long and meritorious services; while Mr. Dundas, who had not only moved the resolutions above-mentioned, but had declared, in 1782, that 'Mr. Hastings scarcely ever left the walls of Calcutta, that his steps were not followed by the deposition of some prince, the desertion of some ally, or the depopulation of some country,' declared in the house, 'that if he had been a director, he would have concurred in that vote:' at the same time, he expressed great joy, that the reso-



lution which he himself had moved, had not been carried into effect. However gratifying these testimonies to his character, from parties formerly adverse to him, may have been to Mr. Hastings, he was not equally fortunate in other quarters. Mr. Burke, who had for a long time applied the powers of his comprehensive mind to the subject of Indian affairs, appears to have been impressed with a deep conviction of the governor's delinquency; and his influence over Mr. Fox was so great, that he easily persuaded that gentleman,<sup>4</sup> as well as the members of opposition generally, to support him in an impeachment: to this course they were also impelled, by a desire of taking revenge, for their fall through the India bill, on a *protégé* of the triumphant minister; nor much less by a hope of regaining popularity, in adopting the cause of the weak against the strong, and declaiming with all the force of eloquence against the principles of arbitrary power.

With regard to the virulent and personal motives which have been charged against Mr. Burke on this occasion, it may be observed generally, that whatever of wrong is discoverable in this part of his conduct, may be imputed to his imagination rather than to his heart. He had been a diligent member of the select committee on the affairs of India; and had for many years bestowed great attention on transactions in that country, where, as an eloquent writer observes, 'the descendants of a throne, once the loftiest in the world, were reduced to stipulate with the servants of traders for subsistence; the dethronement of princes was converted into a commercial transaction; a ledger-account kept of the profit of revolutions; the sanctity of zenanas violated by search-warrants; and the chicaneries of English law transplanted, in their most mischievous luxuriance, into the holy and peaceful shades of the Bramins.'<sup>5</sup> All these occurrences presented scenes highly calculated to work on the feelings of a man, who felt an innate detestation of op-

<sup>4</sup> 'Mr. Fox's acquiescence,' says Mr. Nichols, 'in the wishes of Mr. Burke on this occasion, can be attributed only to the influence which Mr. Burke had over him, and his indulgence to those with whom he acted; for he must have had the sense to see the advantage which this measure gave to his rival Mr. Pitt. Mr. Burke's importance depended on his not being disgraced by this impeachment: Mr. Pitt could at any time inflict that disgrace on him; and as Mr. Burke's influence over Fox guided the opposition, that party was, from the moment that Mr. Pitt acquiesced in the impeachment, under the control of Mr. Pitt.' Recollections, vol. i. p. 173.

<sup>5</sup> Moore's Life of Sheridan, vol. i. p. 440.



pression, and in whom a sense of duty extinguished all thoughts of difficulty or fears of danger. The prominent iniquities of Mr. Hastings's government, exhibited on so large a scale, threw his wiser and more politic measures into the shade: to use Mr. Burke's own words, 'they constantly preyed on his peace, and dwelt night and day on his imagination;' impelling him to commit himself to a cause, which demanded as great moral courage, local knowlege, and mental resources, as any which had ever been undertaken by man.

Though the charges against this delinquent had been long threatened, it was not till the present session of parliament that Mr. Burke brought them forward, being defied to the redemption of his pledge, on the very first day of its meeting, by major Scott, a confidential friend of the ex-governor. This gentleman was probably induced to throw out the challenge, by inferring, from the altered language of Mr. Dundas, that Mr. Hastings, if attacked, would receive the support of administration: he had already acquired that of the board of control, and of the India company, which largely profited by his sway. Mr. Fox, however, declared, in answer to major Scott, that if Mr. Burke should so far forget his duty, other members were fully prepared to institute the proposed inquiry; which declaration gave sufficient indication of the intentions of opposition. Mr. Pitt, whatever may be thought of the motives by which he was actuated, must have considered this proceeding as a seasonable diversion of the attacks of that body from himself and his administration, to an object little concerned with either; though the interest which Mr. Hastings possessed with the sovereign, and other great bodies in the state, necessarily prevented this cautious minister from showing too strong an inclination to appear in the character of an accuser: besides, he well knew, that let the matter of impeachment be carried as it would, he should always retain the power of counteracting its effects: he had not been a member either of the select or secret committee; he had taken no part in the debates on their reports; and he had delivered no opinion on the measures of Mr. Hastings's government in the house of commons: he was, therefore, at liberty to act as policy might dictate.

On the seventeenth of February, Mr. Burke brought the subject before the house; and having requested that the resolutions of May 28, 1782, might be read, declaring the culpability of Mr. Hastings, and the consequent necessity of his recall; he expressed his 'deep regret that the solemn and im-



portant business of the day had not been brought forward, in the plenitude of weight and efficiency, by the original mover of those resolutions.' He feelingly lamented the natural demise of some, the political disease of others, and in particular cases the death to virtue and to principle, which caused him to remain, almost alone, engaged in the attempt to preserve unsullied the honor and consistency of that house, which had designated Mr. Hastings as an object of their formal accusation. Acting under their sanction, he asserted a claim to their protection; and after giving a detailed historical account of parliamentary proceedings with regard to British India, he observed that there were three species of inquisition which might be adopted against a state culprit: the first was a prosecution in the courts below: but in the present case, not to insist on the apparent disinclination of the present attorney-general<sup>6</sup> to exert his powers in the cause, he thought such a mode of trial very inadequate to the complicated nature of this offence, and the enormity of the offender: the second was a bill of pains and penalties; to which he had an insuperable objection, as being unjust towards the accused, by obliging him to anticipate his defence; and by imposing on the house the twofold character of accuser and judge: the third, and only alternative, was the ancient and constitutional mode of impeachment. The first step in such a proceeding was a general review of the evidence, in order that they might determine whether the person charged ought to be impeached or not: with this view, he proposed that the house should resolve itself into a committee; and he afterwards moved for the production of papers, which would form the general ground of accusation. No objection was made to the production of such as were then specified; but as he continued at subsequent meetings to move for other documents, Mr. Pitt raised objections, which Mr. Burke characterised as 'invading the prerogative of a public accuser: he had an unquestionable claim to all such documents, proofs, and papers, as he knew or thought necessary to support the charge which he advanced. When Rome felt within herself the seeds of decline and the inroads of corruption, a man of the first rank and of the highest connexions in the state was brought to trial: Verres, the governor of Sicily, was united by affinity with all that was most splendid and opulent in the seat of empire; with the Hortensii and the Metelli: but when Cicero undertook his

<sup>6</sup> Mr. Arden.



accusation, the government itself adopted his prosecution : no less than 150 days were allowed for the collection of materials ; and the justice of the Roman senate opened to the accuser all the cabinets whence documents were to be obtained.' In the sequel, Mr. Pitt proposed, before he would agree to the requisition, that the accuser should exhibit an abstract of the charges which he meant to adduce, and which the writings called for were intended to substantiate : this was done ; the papers required, with some few exceptions, were granted ; and on the fourth of April, Mr. Burke rose to charge Warren Hastings, Esq., late governor-general of Bengal, with high crimes and misdemeanors in the execution of his office ; exhibiting, at the same time, nine distinct articles of accusation, to which he added thirteen others in the following week. Mr. Hastings, who had been furnished with copies of these articles, as they were produced, was allowed to read his answers at the bar of the house, and the minutes of his defence were ordered to lie on the table. The examination of witnesses lasted three weeks ; towards the end of which time Mr. Burke declared his intention to adopt the suggestion of Mr. Pitt, and take the sense of the house on each charge separately : accordingly, on the first of June, the first article of impeachment was brought forward respecting the Rohilla war.

This question was debated two nights, and the house did not divide till eight o'clock in the morning, when the motion was negatived by a majority of 119 to 67. Mr. Pitt gave a silent vote with the majority on that occasion ; coinciding in opinion with Mr. Dundas and Mr. William Grenville, who contended that this war, as far as Mr. Hastings was concerned, was both just and politic, its scenes of cruelty and extirpation being violently exaggerated by Mr. Burke's eloquence ; that the British governor was not responsible for any acts of cruelty committed by Sujah Dowla ; that it was unfair to call a person to account for transactions after a lapse of thirteen years ;<sup>7</sup> and that, in truth, Mr. Hastings had by implication been acquitted of any blame in the transaction, by having been three times re-appointed governor-general of Bengal by parliament since its conclusion : this Mr. Pitt, on another occasion, called 'the highest certificate of legislative approbation.' Mr. Fox more justly attributed the confederacy between the nabob of Oude and the governor to an iniquitous spirit of rapacity, for which he severely condemned them both : Mr. Powys

<sup>7</sup> This certainly was a very extraordinary assumption.



also reprobated the extirpatory violence of the nabob and his English ally, and concurred in the motion ; as also did lord North, although he was the person who introduced those very acts into parliament, which conferred on Mr. Hastings 'the certificate of its approbation.'

On the thirteenth of June, Mr. Fox brought forward the charge relative to Cheyt Sing, rajah of Benares, which stood third on the list ; and he accused Mr. Hastings of making an unjust demand of troops and money from that prince ; of exacting from him an exorbitant fine, when he hesitated to comply with that demand ; and of causing him to be seized in his own palace, and treated with great cruelty and indignity. The chief arguments in favor of an acquittal on this charge, were introduced in Mr. Pitt's speech, though even he came to a conclusion that it contained matter of impeachment. After Mr. Francis had seconded the motion, and Mr. Nicholls spoken in opposition to it, the minister commenced a long and argumentative harangue, in which he entered at large into the nature of those bonds which unite Indian zemindars to their feudal lords ; showing how they are obliged, on occasions of great emergency, to grant extraordinary aids. Pursuing his inquiry, he next showed how the father of Cheyt Sing had acquired his territory from the nabob of Oude, on the very condition of furnishing him, who was lord paramount, with extraordinary aids, as well as an annual rent : to this inheritance Cheyt Sing had succeeded, while the sovereignty of Benares had been transferred to the company, with all its rights, of which the one in question had always been acknowledged, and had never been revoked by any powers or immunities which at subsequent times had been conveyed to the rajah. The next two points established by Mr. Pitt, were the exigency that justified the governor in making a demand of extraordinary assistance, and the ability of Cheyt Sing to comply with its terms ; after which, he proceeded to what he considered as the best-founded part of the charge, the punishment inflicted on the rajah : the conduct of Mr. Hastings, subsequent to the demand of troops and money, was in his opinion oppressive and tyrannical ; inasmuch as the fine which he determined to levy, was beyond all proportion to the fault committed : in fining Cheyt Sing £500,000 for a mere delay to pay £50,000, the governor had acted in a manner which destroyed all relation between the degrees of guilt and punishment : confining himself, therefore, to the exorbitancy of this fine, without including the subsequent revolution of Benares,



the deposition of the rajah, and the ravages committed by the company's troops, Mr. Pitt agreed to the motion on the present charge, though he did not consider himself pledged thereby to a final vote of impeachment: all he meant was, that if an impeachment were determined on, this act, being in his judgment a high crime and misdemeanor, should be included in its articles. Mr. Powys expressed his satisfaction at the honorable and convincing argument of Mr. Pitt; but could not help lamenting that two of the ministers for India, who spoke after him,<sup>8</sup> had avowed sentiments repugnant to those of the right honorable gentleman; virtually recommending a maxim to which he never could accede—that political expediency sanctified injustice. Lord Mulgrave in reply declared that Mr. Pitt would not deserve to be minister for a single day, if on a question of a judicial nature he expected his friends to sacrifice their opinions to his: Mr. Pitt himself regretted that any difference of opinion should exist between them; but it was an honorable difference; not about a principle, but the application of a principle: he thought the fine exorbitant, but his noble and honorable friends did not. The majority of the house concurred with Mr. Pitt, and the motion was carried by 119 votes against 79. It being found impracticable to go through the rest of the charges in the present session, parliament was prorogued on the eleventh of July; being dismissed with assurances of the satisfaction with which his majesty had observed their diligent attention to the public business; particularly the measures they had adopted for improving the resources of the country, and diminishing the public debt.

On the second of August a singular incident for a short time engrossed public attention. As the king was alighting from his chariot at the garden entrance of St. James's palace, a woman, decently dressed, presented a paper to his majesty; and while he was in the act of receiving it, she struck with a knife at his breast. The king happily avoided the blow by drawing back; and as she was attempting to repeat it, one of the yeomen arrested her, and wrenched the weapon from her hand: his majesty instantly exclaimed,—‘I am not injured; take care of the poor woman, and do not hurt her.’ When examined before the privy council, she evidently appeared insane; for, on being questioned where she had lately resided, she

<sup>8</sup> Lord Mulgrave and Mr. William Grenville, members of the board of control.



answered, in a frantic tone, 'that she had been all abroad since that matter of the crown broke out.' Being farther asked, what matter? she said, 'that the crown was hers; and that if she had not her right, England would be deluged in blood for a thousand generations.' This poor maniac, whose name was Margaret Nicholson, had presented a petition ten days before, full of incoherent nonsense: like most other petitions, it had probably not been read, or the person of the petitioner would have been secured: the idea of a judicial process was of course abandoned, and she was confined for life in Bethlehem hospital. A public thanksgiving was ordered; and addresses of congratulation flowing in from all parts of the kingdom showed the strong hold which George III. had obtained on the affections of the nation: the honor of knighthood was so liberally diffused on occasion of their presentation, that 'a knight of Peg Nicholson's order' became a by-word to complete the degradation of a distinction, which was thought by queen Elizabeth to be a sufficient reward for the most arduous services. In the month of September, his majesty was pleased to appoint a new committee of council for the consideration of all matters relating to our trade and foreign plantations; of which board, Mr. Charles Jenkinson, now created lord Hawkesbury, was appointed president: under this new commission, a treaty of commerce was, on the twenty-sixth of September, signed between the courts of England and France, to continue in force for twelve years: its principle was to admit the commodities of each country to be freely exported and imported at a low *ad valorem* duty: the principal negociator was Mr. Eden, who, under the coalition ministry, had filled the office of vice-treasurer of Ireland. This was the first remarkable defection from that unfortunate alliance; and the more so, as Mr. Eden was generally considered its original projector. 'Mr. Beresford, of Ireland,' says bishop Tomline,<sup>9</sup> 'was the person, through whose intervention Mr. Eden came over to administration: he was anxious to be made speaker of the house of commons, if there should be an opening; but this project of ambition Mr. Pitt did not encourage: it was then contemplated to form a new office, and appoint him general superintendant of the revenue; but this plan being abandoned, it was resolved to send him to negociate this commercial treaty; a business, to which he was extremely well suited. He was much consulted by Mr. Pitt on subjects of finance, and was afterwards created

<sup>9</sup> Life of Pitt, vol. ii. p. 220, note.



a peer by the title of lord Auckland. About the same time, a convention was signed with Spain, which terminated the long subsisting disputes respecting the British settlements on the Mosquito shore and the coast of Honduras. By the present treaty, the Mosquito settlements were formally relinquished, as they had virtually been by an article in the general treaty of 1783: in return, the boundaries of those on the coast and bay of Honduras were somewhat extended. Though in a political view this convention answered a valuable purpose, by removing a source of national contention, yet it is to be regretted that the claims of humanity and justice were not sufficiently attended to; for the Mosquito settlers, who had from time immemorial occupied their lands under British protection, were peremptorily ordered to evacuate the country within the space of eighteen months; nothing farther being stipulated in their favor, than that his catholic majesty 'shall order his governors to grant them all possible facilities for their removal to the settlements agreed on by the present convention.' The greatest consternation and distress among the unhappy people was the consequence of this barbarous edict of expulsion: an affecting representation of their distress, and a humble petition for some indemnification from the government which had thus abandoned them, was subsequently presented to the treasury board; but it does not appear to have met with due attention.

At this period an interesting event happened to the persecuted episcopal church of Scotland. When the independence of the thirteen United Provinces was established, all political connexion between the episcopal churches of England and America ceased; but as an episcopal church could not exist without a head, the clergy of Connecticut sent over one of their body<sup>10</sup> to be consecrated by the English hierarchy. Though the inclinations of the primate and his colleagues, on this point, corresponded fully with those of their transatlantic brethren, an insuperable obstacle seemed to oppose the accomplishment of their wishes. The English ritual requires that the oaths of allegiance and supremacy shall be taken by the prelate about to be consecrated; and these obligations could not be imposed on an American subject: an act of parliament, indeed, might have removed the difficulty, but the American clergy were unwilling to incur that delay; and Dr. Seabury was in consequence advised to make application to the Scotch bishops: he did so; and a correspondence took place between the heads of the

<sup>10</sup> Dr. Seabury.



episcopal churches of England and Scotland ; the result of which was, that Dr. Seabury was consecrated at Aberdeen by bishops Gilgour, Petrie, and Skinner. Thus the oppressed and humble Zion in Scotland had the honor of founding that flourishing church, which comprehends within its pale so large a portion of the inhabitants of the new world. Nor was this all : the attention of the English hierarchy and government was drawn more strongly to the condition of the Scotch episcopalians ; and a negociation was set on foot to remove the penal laws under which they had long labored. The chief obstacle lay in the oath of abjuration, which the episcopalians could not take, so long as Charles Edward, the grandson of James VII. of Scotland, still survived : but while measures for their relief were in progress, the unfortunate pretender died, and their allegiance was readily transferred to the house of Hanover. On the twenty-fifth of May, 1788, his majesty, king George III., was publicly prayed for in the episcopal chapels of Scotland ; but there were still jealousies and prejudices to be soothed and overcome, before the friends of civil and religious liberty could accomplish their purpose ; and it was not till the year 1792, that a bill was carried through parliament, which placed the Scotch episcopalians under the full protection of the law.

The affairs of the prince of Wales at this time again attracted notice. In the beginning of the year, he had formed an acquaintance with a widow lady of the name of Fitzherbert, who, though several years older than himself, still possessed many personal attractions : the manner in which they resided together at Brighton excited general surprise ; and it was first whispered, and then confidently asserted, that a marriage had been celebrated between them according to the ritual of the Roman church, to which the lady belonged : though the story appeared to many persons absurd, yet it gained so much credence, as to be subsequently noticed in the house of commons. This, and other extravagances, rendered the income allowed for the support of his royal highness totally inadequate to that purpose ; and it now appeared that he had contracted debts to the amount of more than £100,000, besides £50,000 expended on Carlton House. Under these circumstances, he applied to the king, declaring that if any part of his conduct was thought improper, he was ready to alter it ; and conform to his majesty's wishes in all things that became a gentleman : the king, on receiving this communication, demanded to see a statement of



the prince's affairs ; but whether from dissatisfaction with this document, or other parts of his son's conduct, he refused to afford him any assistance. His royal highness then adopted the only expedient that was left to him : he resolved to suppress his establishment, to stop the building and decorations going on at Carlton House, to sell his racing stud, and to set apart £40,000 per annum for the liquidation of his debts. This conduct, however laudable, being represented to the king as precipitate and disrespectful, was thought to have increased the distance which had too long subsisted between the prince and his father ; for when he hastened to Windsor on occasion of his majesty's escape from the attempt of Margaret Nicholson, the king refused to see him, although he was received by the queen : it is more probable, however, that the virtuous indignation of George III. was excited by the profligate connexions which his son appeared so prone to form. While his royal highness was in this state of embarrassment, the duke of Orleans, who was on a visit to this country, strongly pressed a loan on his acceptance, until some favorable change should take place in his circumstances : the prince appears to have consented ; but his political friends, being informed of the plan, convinced him of the great impropriety of a step, which had the perilous tendency of placing the future sovereign of England in a state of dependence on a prince of the house of Bourbon.<sup>11</sup> In consequence of such representation, the negotiation was broken off.

On the thirty-first of October died her royal highness the princess Amelia, aunt to his majesty, and last surviving issue of George II. On the continent, no event so much distinguished this year as the death of Frederic II, king of Prussia ; who, for half a century, had acted the most conspicuous part among European potentates ; raising his country, by his intrepid courage, unconquerable fortitude, and fertility of invention, from the rank of a secondary state, to that of a large, well-compacted, flourishing kingdom. As the power of Prussia had risen from the counsels and exertions of Frederic, many apprehended that its stability would be endangered by his death : but his provisions had not been so temporary ; his ministers had been trained by himself ; and for the preservation of his dominions, he bequeathed to his successor the most effectual securities which human wisdom could devise, in a

<sup>11</sup> See Moore's Life of Sheridan, vol. i. p. 469.



well-provided treasury, a highly-disciplined army, experienced counsellors, and a people devoted to the government, institutions, and memory of their deceased monarch: the imperial powers, therefore, declined all interference with the affairs of a state so constituted and affected: besides, being already occupied with ambitious designs in other quarters, they considered it good policy to court the forbearance of Prussia, rather than provoke her to hostilities.



## CHAP. XXX.

## GEORGE III. (CONTINUED.)—1787.

General affairs of Europe—Parliament reassembles—Committee of the house on the commercial treaty with France—Mr. Pitt's measure for consolidating the duties on the customs, excise, and stamps—Motion for the repeal of the corporation and test acts—Payment of the prince of Wales's debts—Impeachment of Warren Hastings voted by the house of commons—Prorogation of parliament—Interference with the affairs of Holland—Meeting of parliament—Continental engagements—Increase of military establishments—East Indian declaratory act—Domestic occurrences, &c.

THE death of Frederic the Great, though not immediately followed by any change in that federative system on which the balance of power had so long rested, may still be reckoned as the commencement of an era; because its most sagacious counsellor and powerful supporter was thereby removed from the scene. That period in the European states-system, at which we are now arrived, embraces three divisions: the first, extending to the treaty of Campo Formio, after which began the active interference of Russia in the disputes of Western Europe; the second, from that treaty to the establishment of the French imperial throne; and the third, to its overthrow, and the restoration of the old order of things by a combination of European sovereigns. At present, however, the confederative structure stood erect, apparently firm and unshaken: but times were near at hand, in which it was destined to experience severer storms than any by which it had been hitherto assailed.

The causes of these momentous events are not difficult to be explained: most of those governments which composed the union were in a state of decay or paralysis, of unsuccessful reform or acknowledged anarchy; while in the greatest of them all, a volcano was raging, which soon burst forth, involving



that empire which was the very citadel of the confederation, and afterwards the whole continent, in its destructive torrent. Despotic power had long been struggling with the rising spirit of freedom; and constitutional assemblies in the different states had either disappeared, or had been reduced to mere forms, without any kind of national representation: nor was it only in the relations between rulers and their subjects that an alteration had taken place; those also between the upper and lower ranks of society had suffered a still greater change: the nobles no longer thought of fulfilling the duties attached to their high privileges; but in proportion as the burdens of the state became more oppressive, the more anxiously did they withdraw from all participation of them; so that the privileged classes were more threatened than the sovereigns: besides, the main strength of almost every country now lay in a standing army, between which and the citizens a broad line of distinction was drawn. One portion of the nation being armed, while the other was defenceless, what remained but submission and subjection if the army was defeated? where existed the pecuniary resources for recruiting it? not a single power on the continent was able to carry on a war without subsidies, or some new species of extortion; the fearful effects of which were soon afterwards unfolded.

Nor were the moral supports of the system less infirm than its political defences: the sanctity of legitimate possession being once violated, as in the case of Poland, the very corner-stone of its foundation was shaken: in the contraction of alliances self-interest had become the moving principle; no power was willing to make any sacrifices for the stability of the system; but a lust of aggrandisement led all to desire an augmentation of revenue, or of territorial possessions: in the mean time, public writers had been employing that powerful instrument, the press, against all constituted authorities; and when democratic principles had been widely circulated throughout Europe, the arguments for popular sovereignty received an apparent confirmation from the success of the American contest: the defenders of colonial independence returned loaded with combustible materials, ready to create a flame whenever accident or design might kindle it, while their wishes were met and forwarded by clubs and secret societies, extensively ramified, in which social equality was inculcated in direct opposition to that variety of condition which is inseparable from monarchical rule: even potentates themselves were drawn into the vortex of



this magic circle, where every thing was contrived to work on the imagination; where vice was concealed under the mask of virtue, and every species of error propagated under the illusions of sophistry. Above all things, the national religion in most states, being contaminated by disgusting ceremonies, impolitic institutions, and artifices of priestcraft, offered the fairest mark to revolutionary satirists, who knew, that in destroying religious sanctions, they were sapping the very foundations of all government. Threatening as these circumstances were, few persons had any presentiment of the impending catastrophe: but, as an ingenious author has observed,<sup>12</sup> 'in this consisted the danger; that every thing in Europe was calculated for the usual state; while every thing was thrown out of its course, as soon as any unusual complication of circumstances took place.'

During the gloomy times that followed, in which the spirit of desolation was let loose to overthrow and to destroy, England shone as a polar star to the benighted nations: and what might have been the fate of England herself, had an immoral and irreligious prince been seated on her throne, or a weak, irresolute minister at her helm? If we consider the qualities demanded by the peculiar difficulties of the period, we shall rarely find an instance of means more providentially adapted to a great end. To stem at its fountain head that torrent of infidelity which was ready to overspread the land, was the glory of the British monarch: to heal the wounds of his bleeding country, replenish her finances, amend her institutions, concentrate her energies, and thus prepare her for that tremendous contest which was about to strain every nerve in the constitution, was the task of Pitt; and nobly did he perform it: when Frederic of Prussia therefore called him, in affected scorn, 'a minister of preparatives,' he unintentionally paid him the highest compliment which a statesman could receive; for he declared him alive to impending dangers; and ready to avert, by all seasonable precautions, that peril, which, if suffered to approach nearer, it might have been impossible to repel.

The British parliament reassembled on the twenty-third of January; but no subject of importance came before it till the twelfth of February, when the house resolved itself into a committee on the commercial treaty with France, which had re-

<sup>12</sup> Heeren's Manual, vol. ii. p. 164.



sulted from Mr. Pitt's enlarged views respecting the interests of the two countries. Taught by former and recent connexions between France and Spain, as well as between France and Austria, he felt that past enmity was not an insurmountable bar to permanent reconciliation; and rightly estimating the advantages that would accrue to industrious and skilful nations from an unfettered trade stimulating their respective efforts, he formed his scheme for promoting a more intimate intercourse with the two greatest of European states. The treaty in question established reciprocal liberty of commerce; the subjects of each power being permitted to navigate and resort to the dominions of the other, without any let or hinderance, while they forbore to transgress the laws; and as the prohibitory duties in each kingdom, by enhancing prices, had reciprocally discouraged the sale of their principal commodities, these were now modified by a tariff to the satisfaction of both. When this measure came before the house, its object, spirit, and provisions were ably and eloquently enforced by Mr. Pitt: 'it was ridiculous,' he said, 'to imagine that the French would consent to yield advantages without any idea of compensation. The treaty would undoubtedly benefit them, but he did not hesitate to say that it would be still more profitable to us: France would gain for her wines and other articles a large and opulent market; but we should procure the same to a much greater extent for our manufactures: both nations were prepared and disposed for such a connexion: France, by the peculiar dispensation of Providence, was gifted, perhaps more than any country on earth, with what made life desirable, in point of soil, climate, and natural productions: Britain, on the contrary, possessing these advantages in a less degree, had, from the happy freedom of its constitution, and the equal security of its laws, risen to a state of great commercial grandeur; and acquired the ability of supplying France with the artificial conveniences of life in return for her natural luxuries.'

Many objections were brought against this treaty by the opposition; but that which created most surprise, was a declaration of Mr. Fox, that 'as France was the natural and unalterable enemy of England, no sincerity could be expected from her; no interest could eradicate what was rooted in her constitution; and the proposed intercourse must prove injurious to the national character of England.' In support of this opinion, he declared that no commercial treaty between the two countries had ever been beneficial to England; on the



contrary, that which followed the peace of Utrecht would have been extremely injurious to her : but to this there was a ready answer ; that England was then very deficient in those manufactures in which she now excelled ; by a free trade therefore she must have been a loser, because she would have given much more than she received : now she would be a gainer, because she would receive more than she gave. From the idea that any nation could be unalterably the foe of another, Mr. Pitt declared that his mind revolted : it had no foundation in experience or history ; it was a libel on the constitution of political society ; and presupposed the existence of diabolical malignity in the original frame of mankind. He also reminded Mr. Fox, that when secretary of state, he himself recognised the necessity of strengthening the intercourse between the two nations ; nay, he had, by an article of the definitive treaty, bound down this country to a commercial treaty with France in the course of two years ; and the English ambassador at Paris had, by his direction, taken active steps to accomplish that object.

The only real objection to the present scheme arose from its inconsistency with the celebrated Methuen treaty, concluded between Great Britain and Portugal ; by which the duties of Portuguese wines imported into England were to be only two-thirds of those imported from France or any other country : this point, however, was conceded by France during the progress of the measure ; the duty on French wines being lowered to that now existing on the wines of Portugal, which latter it became necessary to reduce. The treaty underwent many discussions, calling forth a very creditable exhibition of commercial and political knowledge in both houses : in the commons, several young members eminently distinguished themselves ; especially, Mr. Grenville, in support of the treaty ; Mr. Grey and Mr. Windham, in opposition to it : among the peers, lord Thurlow and lord Hawkesbury, lord Loughborough and lord Carlisle, exerted their respective abilities on the subject ; but the fullest and most detailed reasonings were presented by the marquis of Lansdowne and the bishop of Llandaff.<sup>13</sup> The former nobleman, though he acknowledged the sound policy of cultivating an amicable intercourse with France, considered that the reciprocity of advantages promised

<sup>13</sup> Dr. Watson. A full report of his very able speech is given in his Autobiography, p. 166.



by ministers was ideal; and that Great Britain must lose by the stipulations. The learned and ingenious prelate hoped that ministers had secret motives for this treaty beside those which were avowed: he trusted that its framers had a moral certainty that the French, in consideration of it, would never more, directly or indirectly, disturb us in our Asiatic possessions; that they would not by understood negotiation attempt to rob us of every commercial advantage, every political alliance we had in Europe; and that they would not secretly or openly foment dissensions in Ireland: he trusted that our navy would be increased in a higher proportion than that of France, by our becoming the principal carriers of the produce and manufactures of both countries: these, he said, were probably among the primary motives which induced his majesty's ministers to negotiate the treaty: but as to the ostensible ones, he could see only two of any consequence; one was, a hope of continuing the peace by this commercial intercourse; the other, a prospect of augmenting our revenue by extending our trade: on the first point, he declared, 'that no man would more rejoice than himself to see the time when peace should result from obedience to the benevolent principles of the Gospel; but while it was made simply to depend on the selfish prospects of commercial policy, he could have no confidence in its continuance: it would not last a moment after it became the interest, real or apparent, of France to break it.' He then descanted on the hostile spirit of that country, the hypocritical conduct which she exhibited in the early part of our American contest, and the barefaced perfidy with which she broke the peace, when she saw the best opportunity of distressing us and benefiting herself. 'And shall we now,' said he, 'while we are yet smarting from the consequences of her treachery, become a second time the easy dupes of her duplicity?' He hoped he did not want, more than others, liberality of sentiment in private life; but liberality of sentiment was a complex idea, the component parts of which, when applied to great nations, he could not unfold: before he could begin to think liberally of France, he must learn to forget America: he would not part with his prejudices against France; for they were prejudices which had for ages preserved the liberty and independence of his country: he did not say that France was the natural enemy of Great Britain, but he said more; he believed her to be the political enemy of the liberties of every state in Europe; in a word, he could not



trust her. 'We are now at peace ; both nations are sick of war ; there is no need of a commercial treaty to preserve the peace : if there were, it would be inefficacious to that end ; since every interest of France, her landed, manufacturing, and commercial interest, will be made to stoop to her ambition : this commercial regulation is an opiate, by which she wishes to lull the nation into a torpid state of security, before she strikes the blow which she meditates.'

On the other ostensible motive for the treaty, that of increasing the revenue by extending our trade, his lordship entered at great length, until he exhausted all the arguments which could be urged against it. With regard to the approbation of the scheme expressed by the manufacturers of this country, he asked, how they could reconcile this line of conduct with that which they pursued when the Irish propositions were before parliament ? for to his apprehension, there was scarcely an objection to them, which did not apply with equal or greater force to this treaty : he was a friend to the Irish propositions, though an enemy to the French scheme. Where then was his own consistency ? clearly in this ; that France and Ireland stand in very different relations to this country : he was a friend to the Irish propositions, not from a full persuasion that the arrangements held out by them would not in many cases have interfered with the manufacturing interests of Great Britain ; but from a conviction, that the wealth, strength, and dignity of Ireland would ultimately be the wealth, strength, and dignity of Great Britain : he was an enemy to this treaty, from a full persuasion that it would in many instances interfere with the manufacturing interests of England, and from a conviction that the wealth of France was the poverty of this country ; her strength was our weakness, her dignity our disgrace. 'Aggrandise Ireland, even at your own risk ; still it is the empire which is made rich and powerful : aggrandise France, at the risk of your disadvantage ; and you accelerate the ruin of the empire.' He went on to argue, that it was chiefly by our machinery that the British manufacturers were enabled to baffle all competition in foreign markets, against every disadvantage of the high price of labor, high taxes, and other contingent burdens ; and in proportion as our machinery was copied or exported into foreign countries, our exports of manufactures to those countries would decrease. Hence the law prohibiting the exportation of machinery : but he had it from the best authority, that a model of every tool



used in our manufactories was open to inspection at Paris : as France therefore had our machinery the conclusion was that she would not take our manufactures.

‘The value of our iron exports was a tenth, or, according to other calculations, a ninth part of that proceeding from all our other exports ; yet in this manufacture of iron the French were making the greatest exertions. But it might perhaps be said, that in our coal we should always possess a decided advantage ; yet even here we had cause for alarm : there was no doubt that coal existed as plentifully in France as in England.’ His lordship referred to published authority for its existence in almost every province of that kingdom ; and it was used in all the various fabrics established in Normandy, Burgundy, and Languedoc : he had been told that it was pyritous and slaty : it was not all so ; and this was a fault which would mend as they dug deeper : in the mean time they would increase their importation of it from this kingdom. He traced the excellence of French manufacture in various other articles, as glass, linens, woollens, &c. ; and observed, it was a mistake to suppose that the French people wanted ingenuity or industry. It was the peculiar misfortune of this treaty, that we could know nothing of it but from experiment ; and in making the experiment, we might be undone.

‘But there was a disadvantage in it which could not be called speculative,—the loss which the revenue would sustain by a diminution of the duty on wines ; and if this should be made up by increased consumption, £500,000 of our money, or of our manufactures, must be sent to pay for that article : but he thought the French were much more likely to take our money, which he would rather was lent to any other nation than to France.

‘In favor of the treaty, it had been said, that as France is supposed to contain 24,000,000 of people, and England only 8,000,000, this would open a market greatly in our favor : but to give this argument any weight, it must be shown that these 24,000,000 had as much occasion for our commodities as we had for theirs, and as much money to lay out in purchasing them ; that they would as surely clothe themselves in our woollens and cottons, as we should drink their wines and brandy. It had also been said that our resources would be so increased by an extension of commerce, that in case of any future rupture, we should be more than ever able to contend with France : but this argument, he said, was of no im-



portance, unless it could be shown that the resources of France would not be increased in so high a rate as ours; which had not been, and perhaps could not be shown. But the greatest injury we should sustain would arise from our inciting France to become a manufacturing country, by opening to her our home market, the richest in Europe; by seconding her intentions in creating industry and ingenuity among her people; and, above all, by giving her every opportunity of acquiring that manufacturing skill, in which we at present surpassed her and all the world. His judgment, therefore, was full, clear, and decided against the treaty.'

In all the divisions, however, on this subject in the commons, Mr. Pitt prevailed by large majorities; and the lords having also given their sanction to the measure, both houses, on the eighth of March, presented a joint address of thanks to his majesty, for concluding a treaty so calculated to promote a beneficial intercourse between the two countries, as well as the permanent blessings of peace. This address was moved in the commons by Mr. Blackburne, member for Lancashire; and seconded by captain Berkley, member for Gloucestershire; both of whom, as well as several members for other great commercial places, declared that the treaty was highly approved by their constituents. Captain Berkley added, that the approbation of the inhabitants of Gloucestershire must be the more valuable, as they had been very adverse to Mr. Pitt when he entered into office; but they now felt convinced of his spotless integrity; confessing that he was heir to his father's eminent virtues and talents, and that he had no other object in view but the public good.

These marks of approbation encouraged Mr. Pitt to proceed with his grand scheme of financial reform; and his next measure was the consolidation of duties in the three great branches of revenue, the customs, the excise, and the stamps; a subject intimately connected with the national debt, for the interest on which those duties were the main security. The principles adopted by our ancestors, as suited to the narrow limits of the public exigences and receipts in their times, were no longer applicable to the present enlarged scale of commerce and revenue: the additions to the duties of the customs had become so numerous and complicated, that the several branches, which the officers were obliged to keep distinct, amounted to sixty-eight; and there were articles subjected to fourteen separate duties, extremely difficult of calculation, from the



minute fractions in most of them : even so trifling a commodity as a pound of nutmegs paid nine different duties.<sup>14</sup> So intricate and involved was the whole system, that the merchants were driven to the necessity of relying on the officers ; who, instead of being, as they were intended, a check on the former, became their agents. The manner also in which the value of articles was estimated, led to great errors and fraud ; while similar inconveniences, though to a less extent, pervaded the departments of excise and stamps. Intentions of remedying these evils had often been expressed under different administrations ; but when they came to be examined, so many difficulties presented themselves, and a prospect of so much labor appeared, that no one had ventured to engage in the undertaking, by taking even one preparatory step : it remained, therefore, for Mr. Pitt to ascertain, whether the difficulties were insuperable or not.

After an extensive investigation, and repeated conferences with the most intelligent persons, he submitted a plan to the house, on the twenty-sixth of February ; in which he proposed, that all existing duties should be abolished, one single duty on each article being substituted in their stead, amounting as nearly as possible in value to the former ; and in this equalisation, fractions were to be changed into the integral numbers next above them, by which operation alone the revenue would gain about £20,000 per annum : he proposed also, that in place of distinct funds, the produce of all taxes and duties should form a general one, to be called the consolidated fund, out of which public creditors of every description were to be paid ; the surplus being applicable, under the direction of parliament, to the services of the current year : any deficiency was to be made good out of the supplies ; so that the only objection which could arise on the score of public faith, would be thus obviated. Since many of the subsidies were appropriated to certain annuitants, some of whom were entitled to priority of payment, it was proposed to maintain this right, by making the first payments out of the general fund to such annuitants as were entitled to that priority ; and for this arrangement Mr. Pitt thought it right to procure the consent of all holders of stock, the interest of which was charged on appropriated duties ; who, if they did not signify their dissent before the first of June following, were to be considered as consenting to the plan. Other regulations of a very beneficial kind were

<sup>14</sup> Tomline, vol. ii. p. 236.



attached to this general scheme: to prevent the multiplicity of oaths at the custom-house, the importer was merely required to state the value of his articles; and if the officer suspected any fraud, he might take the goods for the public, at the price of ten per cent above the value specified; and to secure his vigilance, he was to retain a moiety of any sum for which the said goods might be sold, above the declared value and the ten per cent. Money arising from life annuities, not claimed for three years, was to be paid over to the commissioners for the reduction of the national debt; and money arising from casual or unappropriated revenue, which formerly had lain dormant till specially voted for the public service, was to be carried from time to time to the consolidated fund: and, as in former administrations, when taxes were imposed to pay the interest of loans, it was scarcely ever known whether the produce was equal to the charge incurred, Mr. Pitt provided that there should be laid annually before parliament, an account of all future additions to the yearly charge of the public debt, by the interest of any loan negotiated within ten years; as well as an account of the produce in the preceding year, of any duties imposed, or additions made to the revenue, for the purpose of defraying any charge occasioned by such loans respectively.<sup>15</sup>

He also proposed that accounts should be regularly kept of the produce of those duties, which although comprised in the hereditary property of the crown, formed a part of the public income during the life of the king, in consequence of the grant of the civil list. After explaining these provisions as the general outline of a plan, in the detail of which 3000 resolutions were involved, and of which he pledged himself that no important one should pass without the attention of the house being called to it, he determined to leave the subject for private consideration; contenting himself at present with moving a general preliminary resolution, 'that all duties of customs, excise, and stamps do cease and determine, and that other duties be substituted in their stead.' When he ceased speaking, Mr. Burke, and other gentlemen on the opposition side of the house, rose to signify their high approbation of the measure, as well as of the extraordinary clearness and perspicuity with which it had been unfolded: Mr. Thornton, an eminent merchant, and member for Hull, declared that he had the authority of many intelligent persons connected with the

<sup>15</sup> Tomline, vol. ii. p. 242.



customs, who acknowledged that it would be an essential accommodation to all commercial men; in which opinion Mr. Fox agreed, and at the same time candidly declared, that the objection which he had entertained, respecting the appropriated funds and public creditors, was intirely met by the provisions on that head.

As some of the duties to be imposed in consequence of the commercial treaty with France varied from the general rates, Mr. Pitt proposed to add a separate schedule for them at the end of the act, that there might be only one law for reference in all cases: this was objected to, as a design to keep that treaty out of sight; but was ultimately carried. The mover of this important bill, in the different stages of its progress, explained all its parts to the intire satisfaction of the house; and it passed without the slightest objection being made to the consolidated duties; nor did a single stockholder, who had a right to priority of payment, refuse his consent.

On the twentieth of April, the chancellor of the exchequer opened his budget, and informed the house that the flourishing state of the revenue would enable him to provide for all the services of the current year, and to apply the stated surplus to a sinking fund, without the necessity of any loan or new tax; even though it had been found impracticable to reduce the army and navy to the peace establishment, and though last year's revenue had been much impaired by the suspension of trade during the arrangement of the commercial treaties, as well as by uncommonly deficient crops in the West Indies. Mr. Fox and Mr. Sheridan were unwilling to admit that the finances were in so prosperous a condition as they had been represented; and after specifying certain supposed errors and fallacies, they called on Mr. Pitt to supply the alleged deficiency by the imposition of new taxes: he however defended his own estimates, and contended that it was his duty to render by every possible means the taxes already established more productive, rather than increase the burdens of the people. In making this observation, he seems to have had in view a measure, which he soon afterwards proposed, for enabling the board of treasury to divide the country into districts, and to farm the duty on post horses, the greater part of which was now lost to the exchequer, by collusion between the innkeepers and collectors: to make it certain, however, that the revenue would not suffer by this experiment, he proposed to put up the tax for each district at the highest point it had ever reached. An objection was made to this



scheme; that its principle was repugnant, not only to the general system of finance, but to the constitution of the country; and that it might lead to oppression like that exercised in France, where the taxes were generally farmed: Mr. Pitt, however, defended it by the analogy of turnpike tolls, and cross posts; while he showed that the oppression alluded to, arose, not from the system of farming the revenue, but from an arbitrary form of government, which naturally led to arbitrary and oppressive modes of collection. Though the bill was strenuously opposed by the commons in almost all its stages, it was finally carried, and passed the upper house without a division.

Such were the leading features in the great financial scheme introduced by Mr. Pitt during this session; but there were several important subjects brought forward by other members, in the discussion of which he took a leading part: the first of these which deserves particular attention, was a proposition to repeal the corporation and test acts, as far as they related to protestant dissenters. In the late struggle between Pitt and Fox, and the general election which ensued, that body of men had warmly espoused the ministerial side, and thought the present a favorable opportunity of seeking relief from those disabilities of which they had long complained: neither had their leaders been wanting in attempts to predispose the public in their favor; for among them were many aspiring men of genius and learning, naturally anxious to obtain equal privileges with those to whose intellectual superiority they were not inclined to bow: such authors, therefore, as Drs. Price and Priestley, furnished materials; which, being dilated, repeated, and disseminated by others, inclined many persons to question the justice of that policy, which restricted eligibility to office by the imposition of a religious test: when it was found that by such representations an effect had been produced, delegates were appointed to arrange a plan; but these did not petition parliament until they had circulated a paper, entitled 'The case of protestant dissenters with reference to the corporation and test acts;' exhibiting their history, and dilating on the hardships to which conscientious dissenters were exposed by their severe restrictions: after this, they engaged Mr. Beaufoy, a gentleman of great respectability, and a friend of the minister, to move that the house should resolve itself into a committee for taking into consideration these acts, the origin of which he explained in his introductory speech. 'The corporation act declared that no person should be elected into any municipal



office, who had not, within one year before his election, taken the sacrament according to the usage of the church of England : the test act required every person accepting a civil or military office under the crown, to take the sacrament in like manner within a limited time ; in default of which, he was liable to a fine of £500, as well as other severe penalties. The first of these acts was passed in the year 1661 ; and the arbitrary spirit in which it was framed sufficiently appeared from a single clause, empowering the king for a limited time to remove at pleasure all municipal officers by commissioners of his appointment : it was levelled indiscriminately against protestant and catholic dissenters ; but in the year 1673 the state of things became altered ; the jealousy of parliament, in regard to protestant dissenters, had subsided ; while protestants of all denominations were alarmed by the dangers to which they were equally exposed through the attempts of the court to restore the rites of the Romish church. The king himself was believed, on very good grounds, to be a concealed papist ; the duke of York, his immediate successor, was a declared and furious one ; lord Clifford, the chief minister, with many other persons in authority, were also bigoted catholics ; and a declaration of indulgence had been published by his majesty, in order to pave the way for the introduction of popery : under these circumstances, the test act was a measure of national policy and safety : it bore the title of ‘ an act for preventing the danger which may happen from popish recusants ; ’ and the dissenters, far from joining the opposition to it made by the court, publicly declared, through the medium of alderman Love, one of the members for the city of London, ‘ that in a time of national danger they would in no wise impede a measure deemed essential to the public safety ; and though they were accidentally included in its operation, they would waive their claim to exemption ; relying on the good faith, justice, and humanity of parliament, that provision should be made hereafter for their relief : ’ this seasonable declaration greatly facilitated the passing of the bill, and was received with just and general applause. An act for their relief was at a later period of the session passed by the commons, but defeated by the sudden prorogation of parliament : a second was introduced in a succeeding parliament, and passed both houses ; but while it lay ready for the royal assent, the king acted the disgraceful part of secretly ordering the clerk of the crown to withdraw the bill ; and parliament being soon afterwards dissolved, it never became a law. The relief, however, which the



unprincipled conduct of Charles defeated, the magnanimity of William was impatient to bestow: in one of his earliest speeches from the throne, that monarch expressed an earnest hope, 'that such alteration might be made in the law, as would leave room for the admission of all his protestant subjects who were willing to serve him:' but at this period the high church and tory interest predominated over the wise and salutary policy of the court: nevertheless, from the memorable protest of the lords on this subject in the year 1689, it appeared that several of the greatest men of that period coincided in opinion with their sovereign; and on another occasion still later, when a conference took place between the two houses respecting the bill of occasional conformity, the peers in general emphatically expressed their abhorrence of the injustice of the test act.' With regard to the general policy of this law, Mr Beaufoy observed, 'that to the higher trust of legislative authority the dissenters were admitted without reserve: from the members of neither house of parliament was a religious test exacted; whence the absurdity of the imposition might be well inferred. He had indeed heard of an idle opinion, that there was something of a republican tendency, of an anti-monarchical bias, in the presbyterian church; but from so vague an assertion he appealed to experience; and asked, whether the Scotch were suspected of an indifference to monarchy? with a predilection for measures favorable to arbitrary power, he had heard them taxed; but never with levelling principles, or republican sentiments. The English dissenters, since the revolution which had first given to this kingdom a constitution, had uniformly acted on principles most beneficial to it; having constantly proved themselves zealous supporters of that monarchical system which was by law established. Would then the repeal of the test act prove injurious to the church? God forbid! the suggested repeal was no attack on the rights of others; it was merely the completion of that wise system of toleration adopted at the revolution. The church of England flourished long before the test act existed: in Scotland no such law ever had a being: had Scotland then no established church? In Ireland, the relief now solicited had been granted seven years ago; but was the church of Ireland therefore destroyed? In Holland, Russia, Prussia, and Hanover, no traces of such a test were to be discovered. In the territories of the emperor all disqualifications of this nature had been recently abolished. In France a similar relief was granted by the edict of Nantz, from the revocation of which that country had



severely suffered; and which was now, according to report, about to be restored. In fact,' Mr. Beaufoy added, 'the repeal of the test, so far from being pernicious to the established church, would be favorable to its prosperity. The different classes of dissenters had no general interest, no bond of union, except that ignominious exclusion from public offices which was common to them all. Were he farther asked,—If justice be the principle on which you decide, shall not the catholics enjoy the common privileges of citizenship? he would answer, without hesitation,—If the catholics could give a sufficient pledge of loyalty to their sovereign, and attachment to the laws,—questions not at this time before the house,—he should think they ought to be admitted to the civil and military service of the state.' Such were the liberal and politic views of this speaker, who concluded his address by enumerating other considerations in favor of the repeal, drawn from the gross profanation to which the present test subjected the most sacred and solemn of all Christian rites. Mr. Beaufoy declared 'that he should have thought it not unbecoming the sanctity of the bishops to have solicited the removal of so great a scandal from the church:<sup>16</sup> but let the requisition come from whatever quarter it might, sure he was, that a compliance with it would reflect honor on the house; for whatever tended to debase religion, must diminish political authority, and weaken all the sanctions of civil and social order.'

Lord North, true to his original principles, rose with zeal to oppose what appeared to him a dangerous attempt at innovation. Declaring himself friendly to toleration in its full extent, he conjured the house to reflect, that the present motion involved, not merely toleration, but the repeal of an act which was the great bulwark of the constitution, and to which we owed the inestimable blessings of freedom. The exclusion of the dissenters from civil offices inflicted on them no injury, no disgrace: the test act was merely a civil and political regula-

<sup>16</sup> Bishop Watson, in his Memoirs, relates, that a meeting of the bench was convened on this subject, on a summons from the archbishop of Canterbury, and at the instance of Mr. Pitt. The question proposed, was put thus:—Ought the corporation and test acts to be maintained? 'I was the junior bishop,' he observes; 'and as such, was called on to deliver my opinion first; which I did in the negative. The only prelate who voted with me was bishop Shipley. The then archbishops of Canterbury and York, the bishops of Worcester, Lincoln, Ely, Peterborough, Norwich, Exeter, Bangor, Bath and Wells, Rochester, and Lichfield, voted that the acts ought to be maintained.'



tion ; and the arguments against it were equally applicable to every restriction which the wisdom of government in all countries had found necessary to be established. He dwelt on the alarm felt by the clergy at this attempt ; and added, that all knew the pernicious nature of a cry, that ‘the church is in danger.’ No complaints existed of ecclesiastical tyranny : universal toleration was firmly established : let the house, therefore, be on its guard against innovation in the church ; and confound not the toleration of religious opinions with the mode of admission to civil and military appointments. Mr. Pitt enforced the arguments of lord North with still more ability and address : he declared, in very flattering and explicit terms, the esteem and regard which he felt for the collective body of protestant dissenters, who had ever approved themselves the genuine and zealous friends of constitutional liberty : of this their conduct during the late political conflicts had given a memorable proof ; and he acknowledged with gratitude and pleasure the honorable and unanimous support which he had received from them at that interesting and momentous crisis : but he must, however reluctantly, discharge what he conceived to be his indispensable duty, in opposing the present application. It had been said, if you grant this repeal, the same persons will soon come to ask for something more ; but such an argument had no weight with him : he would not object to concede what he ought, because he might be asked to concede what he ought not. A distinction, however, was, in his opinion, necessary to be made between political and civil liberty : the latter was already enjoyed by dissenters in its full extent ; the former was in fact nothing else than a distribution of power, which must be regulated by the discretion of the state : its employments and offices are not the property of individuals ; they are public trusts, to be confided to those who are politically competent to occupy them. The dissenters desire a participation in them as a matter of right and justice : if this were granted, they might acquire a dangerous ascendancy in corporations ; and an exclusive corporation interest in the hands of the dissenters was a very different thing from the liberty of sitting in that house, on the free choice of the general mass of electors : it was now indeed asserted that they had no such object in contemplation ; but it was necessary to take into account the real springs by which human affairs were regulated, and not depend on the security of words against the tenor and tendency of actions. Highly as he esteemed many of the present dissenters, there were some among them



who would not admit that any ecclesiastical establishment was necessary : against such it behoved the legislature to be on its guard. While they enjoyed perfect freedom to serve God according to their consciences, the apprehension and fears of another class of men equally respectable, and much more numerous, were not to be disregarded. It was impossible to separate the ecclesiastical and political liberties of this country ; the church and state were united on principles of mutual expediency, and by indissoluble ties ; wherefore it concerned those, to whom the care of the state was entrusted, to be cautious lest they rashly endangered the church ; the ruin of which must involve that of the state.

Mr. Beaufoy's motion was powerfully supported by Mr. Fox, who declared, ' that whatever personal reason he might have to complain of the recent conduct of the dissenters, he would never lose sight of the great principles of civil and religious liberty, on which the present application was founded. He had considered himself honored by acting with them on many former occasions ; and he acknowledged the general tenor of their political conduct to be in the highest degree meritorious. In his opinion, it was very unwise in any case to take religion for a test in politics ; and he averred, that the maxims advanced by Mr. Pitt were such, that although he declined persecution in words, he admitted the whole extent of it in principle.' On a division after long debates, the motion was rejected by 178 votes against 100.

If the ministerial opposition to this measure be taken into account, the division was not discouraging : but the dissenters were much chagrined at the line of conduct adopted by Mr. Pitt ; for it was generally supposed that at least he would not have discountenanced their efforts. They saw that he stood in a different situation from that of his great predecessor, Sir Robert Walpole, under whose administration the measure of repeal was last brought forward ; but they did not make sufficient allowance for his peculiar circumstances. In the turbulent times of Walpole, the popular voice was so inimical to their claims, that the minister, though personally favorable to them, did not dare to take on himself the responsibility of an advocate : in the present instance, it is true, the application of the dissenters was not so opposed to the general sense of the public, or of parliament, but that a slight degree of countenance from the court would have sufficed to ensure its success : in that quarter, however, a conscientious, and therefore an insuperable hostility existed ; so that a determination in



Mr. Pitt to force the measure through parliament, would undoubtedly have led to his dismissal: and whether such an event would have been desirable at this period; when so many important interests were involved in his administration, can hardly be a matter of doubt.

From this subject the attention of the house was soon called to the painful state of embarrassment in which the heir apparent was involved. Though the prince had now lived in comparative privacy about nine months, little progress had been made in the diminution of his debts, on account of their large amount and accruing interest: under these circumstances, he was persuaded by his friends to permit an application to be made on his behalf to parliament; and on the twentieth of April, Mr. Alderman Newnham rose to ask Mr. Pitt whether it was his intention to bring forward any proposition for extricating his royal highness from his embarrassed situation. Having received an answer in the negative, he gave notice, that on the fourth of May he would himself introduce the subject to the house, by a motion for an address to his majesty, praying him to take the prince's situation into consideration, and to grant him such relief as in his royal wisdom he might think fit; at the same time pledging the house to make good the same. An interesting conversation followed this announcement, in which the worthy alderman was earnestly entreated by the minister, as well as by several other members, to withdraw his motion, as being pregnant with inconvenience and mischief. Mr. Pitt said, 'that by the perseverance of Mr. Newnham, he should be driven to disclose affairs which it would otherwise be his duty to conceal;' and Mr. Rolle, member for Devonshire, declared 'that the question involved circumstances essentially affecting the constitution both in church and state.' These innuendoes evidently alluded to the report of a private marriage celebrated between the prince and Mrs. Fitzherbert; and there was a doubt in the minds of many persons, whether the act passed in the twelfth of George III. would have exempted him from the penalty incurred by so imprudent a step;—a penalty no less than exclusion from the throne of this realm:<sup>17</sup> for although that would have nullified the alleged contract; yet there are analogous cases in law, where the nullity of an illegal transaction does not cancel the penalty attached to it.

<sup>17</sup> 'Every person,' says the bill of rights, 'who shall marry a papist, shall be excluded, and for ever be incapable of inheriting the crown of this realm.'



Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, and other gentlemen in the confidence of the prince, declared, that 'there was nothing which his royal highness less feared than a full and impartial investigation of his conduct; and nothing which he would more deprecate, than a studied ambiguity or affected tenderness, under the pretence of respect or indulgence.' Mr. Rolle was in vain called on to explain the extraordinary language which he had used; and when the subject was afterwards resumed, Mr. Fox referred it to a malicious calumny, which had been propagated without doors by the enemies of the prince, with a view to depreciate his character, and injure him in the esteem of his country. Mr. Rolle then thought proper to acknowledge that his allusions had a reference to this subject; which produced a contradiction of the report by Mr. Fox in the most unqualified language: and in answer to an observation, that although such a marriage could not take place under legal sanction, there were ways in which the law might, in the minds of some persons, have been satisfactorily evaded; Mr. Fox replied, that 'it not only could never have taken place legally, but it never occurred in any way whatever; and had been from the beginning a base and malicious falsehood.'

In consequence of this explicit declaration, Mr. Rolle was repeatedly called on to express himself as satisfied; but from apparent distrust, he declined saying any thing farther, than 'that the house would judge for themselves of what had passed.' As far as public opinion was concerned, he was justified in retaining his doubts; and to increase the perplexity of this mysterious business, it was reported and believed, that a temporary coolness had taken place between the prince and Mr. Fox, in consequence of that indignation, which had inadvertently carried the latter beyond the strict limits of his commission. The minister, however, had no farther pretext for refusing the relief which the situation of the prince required: an interview between his royal highness and Mr. Pitt took place at Carlton House, in consequence of which the intended motion was withdrawn; and a message from the crown on the subject of his royal highness's debts was followed by an addition to his annual income of £10,000 out of the civil list; an issue of £161,000 from the same source for the payment of his debts; and £20,000 on account of the works at Carlton House.

The proceedings against Warren Hastings were resumed at an early period of the session, and continued to the end of it, with intervals occasioned by the pressure of important business. The grand question of impeachment, owing to the secret incli-



nations of the court, and the undetermined conduct of Mr. Pitt, still remained doubtful; when Mr. Sheridan, on the seventh of February, opened the fourth charge, respecting the treatment of the princesses of Oude, in a speech, the surpassing eloquence of which proved decisive in its consequences. The substance of this charge has been already recorded in the narrative of Indian transactions, but of the brilliant speech by which it was supported, imperfect records only remain; so that it is difficult to give even a faint idea of that excellence, which was honored by the most rapturous applause ever elicited from a British senate. 'The conduct of Mr. Hastings,' said the orator, 'respecting the nabob and begums of Oude, comprehends in it every species of human offence: he has been guilty of rapacity at once violent and insatiable, of treachery cool and premeditated, of oppression unprovoked, of barbarity wanton and unmanly. So long since as the year 1775, the begum princess, widow of Sujah ul Dowla, wrote to Mr. Hastings in the following moving terms:—'If it be your pleasure, that the mother of the late nabob, that myself, his other women, and his infant children should be reduced to a state of dishonor and distress, we must submit: but if, on the contrary, you call to mind the friendship of the late blessed nabob, you will exert yourself effectually in favor of us who are helpless.' But inflamed by disappointment at Benares, he hastened to the fortress of Chunar, to put in execution the atrocious design of instigating the nabob, son of this princess, to matricide and plunder. No sooner had Mr. Hastings determined to invade the substance of justice, than he resolved to avail himself of her judicial forms, and despatched a messenger for the chief justice of India<sup>18</sup> to assist him in perpetrating the violence which he meditated. Without a moment's pause, or the shadow of process instituted, sentence was pronounced; and thus, at the same time that the sword of government was converted to an assassin's dagger, the pure ermine of justice was stained and soiled with the basest contamination. It was clear to demonstration, that the begums were not concerned in the insurrection of Benares: no, their treasures were their treason. If,' said the eloquent speaker, 'the mind of Mr. Hastings were susceptible of superstition, he might image the proud spirit of Sujah ul Dowla looking down on the ruin and devastation of his family; beholding the palace which he had adorned with the spoils of the devoted

<sup>18</sup> Sir Elijah Impey.



Rohillas plundered by his base and perfidious ally ; and viewing the man, whom on his death-bed he had constituted the guardian of his wife, his mother, and his family, forcibly exposing those dear relations, the objects of his solemn trust, to the rigor of the merciless seasons, or the violence of the more merciless soldiery. Such were the awful dispensations of retributive justice ! It was not given to that house to witness the tremulous joys of the millions, whom the vote of that night would save from the cruelty of corrupted power : but the blessings of a people, thus delivered, would not be dissipated in empty air : no ; they would lift up their prayers to Heaven in gratitude to the power, which, by stretching its mighty arm across the deep, had saved them from ruin and destruction.' When Mr. Sheridan had finished speaking, many members acknowledged that their sentiments had been changed by the facts adduced, and the cogent reasoning with which they had been accompanied ; so that an adjournment was moved, to afford time for the dispassionate consideration of the question, when the minds of the committee should be relieved from the impression of such fascinating eloquence. This unprecedented proposal was strongly opposed by Mr. Fox ; but Mr. Pitt contending that many circumstances had been brought forward in this truly eloquent harangue, which required reference and investigation, the motion was carried without a division. Next day, major Scott entered into a long and elaborate defence of the governor ; after which, Mr. Pitt observed, that as he had ever thought this charge bore the strongest marks of cruelty and criminality, so he had been peculiarly careful to guard against prejudice, and to keep his mind open for the reception of whatever might tend to produce a right judgment, either in the establishment of innocence, or the conviction of guilt : he was glad therefore that the debate had been adjourned, as he was now prepared to deliver his sentiments with much greater satisfaction to himself than he could have done the preceding evening. After coolly weighing the arguments which came with such irresistible force from the honorable gentleman who advanced the charge, and inquiring into some transactions which had been placed in a new point of view, the minister declared that he should give his decided assent to the motion. He appeared thoroughly penetrated with a conviction of the atrocity of the facts adduced, as well as with the strength of the evidence by which they were supported : he considered Mr. Hastings's conduct as utterly unjustifiable, in authorising the resumption of the jaghires, and the seizure of



the treasures of the begums ; observing, that these crimes were highly aggravated by his making a son the instrument of robbing his mother, and by refusing to revise his proceedings in obedience to the orders of the directors. Mr. Sheridan expressed himself highly gratified by the approbation of a minister who had shown himself able to lay aside party feelings, by coming forward in defence of the honor and character, not only of that house, but of the whole nation. With regard to the imputation of undue severity towards Mr. Hastings, with which he had been charged ; he declared, that he was incapable of harboring malignant feelings against that gentleman, or any other person. Such was the enthusiastic spirit excited in the house, that this motion was carried by 175 votes against 68.

On the second of March, Mr. Pelham opened the charge relative to the nabob of Ferruckabad ; in which he accused the governor of withdrawing his protection from that prince, in consequence of having received a present of £100,000 from the vizir of Oude ; and of being the primary cause of the cruel oppression which the nabob for many years had suffered from the vizir, under whom he held his dominions. On this occasion, lord Hood argued very strenuously in favor of Mr. Hastings, on the ground that great allowance ought to be made for persons placed in high and responsible situations ; who frequently found themselves compelled to act in a manner not strictly consonant with the rules of equity and justice : he also considered Mr. Hastings's eminent services and merit as greatly outweighing his errors and delinquencies ; and he feared that any censure or punishment of him might operate as a check on the exertions of future governors and commanders. His lordship referred to his own conduct in the West Indies, when the fleet under his command was in extreme distress from the want of bread, and he obtained a supply by resorting to means not authorised by law.

Mr. Pitt intended to have given a silent vote on this occasion, but could not suffer the sentiments of the last speaker to pass without notice. After highly complimenting the noble lord on the purity of his own character and conduct, he cautioned the house against allowing their interference with the situation of the unfortunate person, (for so he would call him) who was the subject of that day's debate. The noble lord had argued generally in favor of those, who being entrusted with the great interests of their country, were sometimes reduced to the necessity of sacrificing those interests, or of violating the direct rules of private justice : such situations were likely to



occur, and were much to be lamented ; and it was natural for the noble lord, whose intentions were always fair and upright, and who was conscious that he had suffered no such necessity to operate on himself beyond what the case rendered indispensable, to resort to such a supposition in excuse of Mr. Hastings : but was the conduct of this gentleman, now before the house, correspondent to such principles ? Was the crime that day alleged against him justified by necessity ; or was it of such a size and complexion as any necessity could justify ? Where a departure was made from justice and equity, it was not sufficient to say, that such a step was necessary ; it was incumbent on the party accused to point out and prove the necessity, as well as the consequences likely to flow from a too rigid observance of strict justice ; in order that a comparison might be made between the object to be gained and the sacrifice to be made, and a judgment of censure or approbation be founded on the result of such comparison : but in this instance no state necessity whatever was attempted to be shown ; and therefore no ground existed for those, who saw a criminal tendency in the transaction, to refuse their consent to the motion.

With regard to the general merits of Mr. Hastings, there had been a period, he confessed, in which such an argument might have been urged with some effect : at the commencement of the inquiry, the house might have weighed his crimes against his virtues, and considered whether the latter were of sufficient excellence to counterbalance the former : but such a consideration could not with any propriety be entertained after the inquiry had once been instituted : the committee were not then required to determine, on a general view of facts, the general merits or demerits of the person accused ; but on the investigation of a particular transaction, the criminality or innocence of that single transaction. Besides, Mr. Hastings himself had disclaimed all the benefit which might have been expected from a general view of his services : he desired to stand or fall by the result of an investigation into each particular charge ; and it would be highly unjust towards him to depart from the line in which he chose to have his conduct considered : still he admitted, that there remained a stage, in which the merits of that gentleman might and ought to be weighed against his failings ; and that was, when, in case of conviction on the charges laid against him, he came to receive sentence. With respect to the particular charge under discussion, which had been already so ably handled, he would



only say, that Mr. Hastings had, from his own words, clearly convicted himself of criminality.

Mr. Pitt then read a part of the governor's correspondence; where, speaking of the recall of Mr. Shee from Ferruckabad, Mr. Hastings acknowledged, 'that by so doing he must give up the nabob Muzuffir Jung to the oppression of the vizir.' Besides, what could excuse his acceptance of so large a present as he had received from the latter potentate? Could this be excused by any degree of necessity? Was there a fleet in want of necessary supplies, or an army waiting for subsistence? Or did any branch of the public service render so extraordinary a resource requisite? No: it could be justified by no necessity; it could be accounted for by no principle but that of corruption. Mr. Pitt then very successfully showed, that no evil, but rather an advantage, would occur to the service of the country by this example of parliament, in the prosecution of a great delinquent; and the motion was carried by a majority of 112 against 50.

Sir James Erskine opened the charges relative to contracts and salaries, on the fifteenth of March, in a speech which comprehended a vast variety of matter; accusing Mr. Hastings of profuse and corrupt conduct, in direct opposition to the most positive orders of the directors: this question was carried by sixty-six to twenty-six. The affair relative to Fyzoolla Khan was brought forward by Mr. Windham. Mr. Pitt, though he did not speak in the debate, coincided in sentiment with Mr. Dundas, who expressed a strong opinion of the governor's criminal conduct; and the charge was confirmed by a majority of ninety-six to thirty-seven. On the second of April, Mr. Sheridan introduced to the house the charge on the subject of presents, in which he accused Mr. Hastings of directly violating the regulating act of 1773. 'In every part of his conduct,' he exclaimed, 'the late governor-general exhibited proofs of a wild, eccentric, and irregular mind; in pride, in passion, in all things changeable, except in corruption: his revenge was a tempest, a tornado, involving all within its influence in one common destruction; but his corruption was regular and systematic; a monsoon, blowing uniformly from one point of the compass, and wafting the wealth of India to the same port, in one certain direction.' On this occasion, even lord Mulgrave and Mr. William Grenville spoke very strongly against the accused, and condemned his conduct as highly criminal: the latter observed, 'that Mr. Hastings had



not merely accepted presents, but had extorted money for his own private use; and it was his wish to carry before the august tribunal of the lords, the man who had dared to sully the lustre of the British name, and to trample on the sacred inheritance of an unoffending race of people.' The charge indeed was so clearly proved, that major Scott himself could not deny the facts, but only attempted to clear his friend by a declaration, that he had misunderstood the act of 1773, and had applied the money to the use of the company. Many members, who had voted for Mr. Hastings on the other charges, withdrew their support from him on this; and the question was carried by a majority of 165 votes against 54.

Though two charges still remained to be discussed, it was now proposed, according to what had been settled on the twenty-second of last month, that a report of resolutions already passed should be immediately made to the house. Before this report, however, was read, Mr. Pitt manifested great anxiety, that in so important an affair, such a method should be adopted as might leave him and other members at liberty to deliver their sentiments, and give their votes freely on the grand and decisive question of impeachment: for having in some of the charges acquiesced only to a certain extent in the degree of guilt imputed to the accused, he could not justify himself in agreeing to a general vote of impeachment, which might seem to countenance the whole of the several charges as they now stood. Having suggested, therefore, as the best mode of proceeding, that these charges should be referred to a committee, who, selecting the criminal matter out of them, might frame it into articles of impeachment, he waited for information on this point from the authors of the prosecution.

Mr. Fox objected to Mr. Pitt's suggestion; and contended that it would be better to agree to the report now under consideration, and immediately send word to the upper house, that the commons had resolved to impeach Mr. Hastings; pledging themselves to present articles with all convenient despatch, and reserving to themselves the constitutional right of supplying more: Mr. Burke, however, having heard the minister's reply to Mr. Fox, consented to adopt his suggestion: the report was then read, and an order unanimously made, that it should be taken into consideration next day, when the several resolutions, including nine of the original charges, were agreed to without a division; and on the same day a committee was appointed to prepare articles of impeachment grounded on those resolutions.



On the nineteenth of April, Mr. Francis opened the charge relative to the Bengal revenues, accusing the governor of a systematic and flagitious abuse of his powers; and although Mr. Pitt in this instance supported the cause of Mr. Hastings, the motion was carried by seventy-one votes against fifty-five. On the twenty-fifth, Mr. Burke, as chairman of the committee, presented six articles of impeachment; and on the ninth of May, having moved that the house should agree to the report, a long debate ensued, in which Mr. Pitt, after concisely recapitulating the principal charges against the governor-general, declared that it was impossible for him to vote against the motion. Though he considered the whole of the charges as highly exaggerated in some parts, and as not well founded in others; yet in all of them there were instances of the most flagrant acts of injustice, oppression, and peculation; acts which never could be vindicated, but on the plea of necessity: yet no necessity had been shown; nor was it possible that necessity itself could excuse such actions, accompanied by such circumstances. In answer to Mr. Nathaniel Smith, chairman of the East India company, who had endeavored to vindicate the governor, on the ground that he was not the person who first began the interference of the company with the native princes, or who established that influence which it had obtained in their politics, Mr. Pitt observed,—‘that to whomsoever such influence might be originally attributed, Mr. Hastings was answerable for the management of it, as long as it was in his hands; and to excuse him on this plea, would be to justify the tyranny by the power: for though the influence of the company had given him power to oppress the country, it had not imposed on him the necessity of so doing.’ Mr. Pitt concluded a speech replete with dignified and manly sentiments, by declaring, ‘that the house could no otherwise consult its own honor, its duty to the country, and the ends of public justice, than by sending up the impeachment to the house of lords.’ The motion was accordingly carried by a majority of 175 to 89; and on the tenth of May, Mr. Burke, in the name of the commons, repaired to the bar of the upper house, and impeached Mr. Hastings of high crimes and misdemeanors; at the same time acquainting their lordships, that the commons would with all convenient speed exhibit articles against him, and make good the same. On the fourteenth of May, Mr. Burke brought forward the last charge, in which he accused the governor of being the cause of all the distresses which had afflicted the province of Oude; and the motion was



carried unanimously, with scarcely any debate. On the twenty-first, Mr. Hastings was taken into custody by the serjeant-at-arms, who delivered him to the usher of the black rod ; but, on the motion of the lord chancellor, he was admitted to bail,<sup>19</sup> being ordered to deliver an answer to the articles of impeachment in one month from that time.

On the same day, the seventh article of impeachment, being presented to the house by Mr. Burke, was ordered to be carried up to the lords : and on the twenty-third, thirteen more articles were presented to the house of commons, which were also carried to the upper house on the twenty-eighth. No farther proceedings against Mr. Hastings took place this present session, which was closed on the thirtieth of May.

It appears from the correspondence of Mr. Pitt and lord Carmarthen with our ambassadors at Versailles and the Hague, that serious disagreements had arisen between the English and French subjects resident in India, relative to an article in the treaty of 1783, which secured to the latter a free and independent trade in that country ; also that France and Holland had increased their naval forces in those seas to such an extent, as to cause serious apprehensions in the mind of our government. France, indeed, soon after the American war, when she had succeeded in detaching the colonies from England, began to meditate aggression on a still more extended scale ; and the plan of a confederacy was laid to inflict new wounds on this country before those made by the late war were healed. France, Spain, Holland, and the sultan of Mysore, entered into a compact against different parts of our possessions ; and the plan of these confederates, regarding India, was to unite the French and Dutch forces in attacking the British possessions ; to restore to the native princes all their conquered provinces ; and to secure for the two nations, factories and commercial establishments, which were to be free to the whole world. Trincomalee, in the island of Ceylon, was the place destined for the rendezvous of the troops, and the marquis de Bouillé<sup>20</sup> was to command the expedition. The disastrous state of the French finances, and events which are about to be detailed in Holland, prevented this Indian explosion ; but Spain and Mysore succeeded, the former in provoking hostilities at Nootka Sound, the latter in kindling that blaze of war which consumed

<sup>19</sup> Himself in £20,000, and two sureties (Messrs. Sullivan and Sumner) in £10,000 each.

<sup>20</sup> See his Memoirs published in London in 1797.



the principal agent. Mr. Pitt in these circumstances took advantage of Mr. Eden's residence at Paris, to arrange a convention, which was signed on the thirty-first of August; in which specific regulations were laid down, and the rights and privileges of the French factories were clearly defined: but the pacific assurances which accompanied this document, were solely attributable to the domestic embarrassments of France and Holland.

The dissensions which had for some time prevailed in the United Provinces, at length rose to such a height, as to demand the interposition of neighboring states. We have already seen, that the stadtholder, who did not participate largely in those talents which distinguished the house of Nassau, had retired to Nimeguen, from the indignities offered to his person by the aristocratical party in the states; while the people, who, in the late contest with the emperor, had been encouraged to form themselves into armed associations, began to claim a share in the government, and assert their right to be represented in the legislative and executive councils. The party opposed to the stadtholder had long received encouragement from the court of Versailles, from the hope of gaining an ascendancy in the United Provinces, and rendering them subservient to the interests of France; of which design England and Prussia, the two powers most interested in preserving the independence of the Dutch republic, were well aware: but Frederic the Great, though he resented the indignities offered to the husband of his niece, and presented several memorials to the States-General on the subject, had now lost much of his former vigor, and was also too much inclined to favor French interests, in opposition to those of Great Britain. His successor, however, had no such prejudices to encounter; nor did he want encouragement from his minister, count Hertzberg, to form a close alliance with England, as a counterpoise to the ambitious designs of the two imperial courts, who were preparing to augment their own territories by the dismemberment of the Turkish empire. The best interests of France would have led her to join this Anglo-Prussian league; but nothing seemed capable of rescuing that unhappy country from the fate which ages of error and crime had been preparing for her.

While affairs stood thus, the consort of the stadtholder, a princess of a high and proud spirit, and on that account peculiarly obnoxious to the prevailing party, undertook a journey to the Hague for the purpose of making some proposals from her husband to the States-General; but on the twenty-eighth



of June, she was arrested in Holland, with her suite, by a body of armed burghers and a detachment of cavalry, who carried her back to Schonhoven as a prisoner: having remained there under guard the whole of the next day, she was permitted to return to Nimeguen, though not without experiencing very insolent treatment from the soldiers who had her in custody. This indignity, offered to his sister, roused the spirit of the Prussian monarch, who insisted that immediate satisfaction should be made, and exemplary punishment inflicted on those who had committed the outrage; but the states of Holland publicly justified the conduct of the military, and contended that the measures pursued were necessary for preserving the peace of the province: the States-General, however, and even the court of Versailles, acknowledged the justice of Frederic William's complaint; though the French ministers still secretly encouraged the stadtholder's opponents; and even proceeded so far, as to assemble a corps of 14,000 men at Givet, in the territory of Liege, in order to oppose the interference of Prussia in the affairs of Holland.

Though nothing at this time could have been less agreeable to Mr. Pitt than the prospect of a war, engaged as he was in economical reforms and financial arrangements; yet the reduction of the United Provinces to a state of dependence on France was not to be endured: he, therefore, entered cordially into the king of Prussia's line of policy; and as the friends of the house of Orange were more in want of money than men, he privately supplied them with a loan without the authority of parliament; affording them all possible encouragement, and offering to the States-General, through our ambassador at the Hague,<sup>1</sup> the mediation of the British government for the restoration of their legitimate government under the authority of the stadtholder: these offers, however, being rejected, and it being evident that nothing but the sword could decide the point in dispute; the oligarchical party applied for assistance to France, against the king of Prussia, who was now ready to march into the United Provinces, for the purpose of at once avenging the insult offered to his sister, and restoring the prince of Orange to his office.

On the sixteenth of September, the court of Versailles made a regular notification to that of St. James's, of its intention to aid the States-General; which produced a reply, that in such a case, the king of Great Britain would take an active part in

<sup>1</sup> Sir James Harris, afterwards lord Malmesbury.



favor of the stadtholder ; and a treaty was immediately signed with the landgrave of Hesse Cassel, who agreed to furnish 12,000 troops within a short specified time after they should be required, on condition of his receiving a subsidy of £36,000 a year. Mr. Pitt with his usual energy sent despatches, both by sea and land, to Bengal and Madras ; directing the governors to be prepared, in case of war, to attack the French possessions, and to seize the Dutch settlements in the name of the stadtholder : and it appeared in the answers to those despatches, that the French governor, as if expecting war, was strenuously employed in fortifying Pondicherry ; while Tippoo Saib was expected to join him with all the force of Mysore.

The court of Versailles, however, perceiving the determined spirit of the British government, and distracted by its own financial embarrassments, declined all open co-operation with the aristocratic party ; and was under the mortifying necessity of abandoning those designs on the United Provinces, which had long been among its most cherished projects. The duke of Brunswick, who commanded the Prussian forces in the contiguous duchy of Cleves, entered Holland at the head of 18,000 men on the thirteenth of September ; and so rapid were his successes, that on the seventh day after the commencement of this invasion, he made his public entry into the Hague. Amsterdam alone made any show of resistance ; but after a fortnight's siege it surrendered to the victorious arms of the duke ; and to the astonishment of Europe, that proud republic, which maintained a contest of eighty years with Spain in the plenitude of her power, and resisted all the efforts of Louis XIV., was overrun by the Prussian troops in a single month : the stadtholder, having made a triumphant entry into the Hague, was not only reinstated in his former privileges, but gratified with new ; the ancient forms of government were re-established ; and tranquillity being restored, the duke of Brunswick withdrew the main body of his forces before the end of October, leaving about 4000 men in the United Provinces : at the same time, an amicable arrangement was effected between the courts of England and France, by which it was agreed to discontinue warlike preparations on both sides, and to place the navy of each kingdom on the peace establishment. Thus while Mr. Pitt was raising Great Britain to that degree of consideration among the continental powers which she held under the administration of his father, France was losing all the reputation to which her position, and force, and the



warlike spirit of her inhabitants entitled her. As the disordered state of her finances was the greatest of her evils, changes were made in the measures connected with that department, which had been so ill managed by Calonne, that there was a deficiency of near £4,000,000 sterling, to be supplied by a loan: such however was the public terror at its announcement, that the parliament of Paris refused to register the royal edict; and the financial dispute soon grew into a quarrel respecting privilege: the king issued a peremptory order, and the edict was finally registered; but not without a protest against the compulsion used. His majesty, indignant at this insult on the royal authority, ordered the resolution to be torn out of the journals, and thus roused all the pride and passion which lay concealed under the dissolute manners of the nation. In this state of things, Calonne, as if madness ruled every act of his ministry, summoned the notables,<sup>2</sup> and laid the financial state of France before them; acknowledging that the annual expenditure exceeded the receipts by £4,000,000 sterling, and proposing a general land-tax, with the abolition of all immunities, as the means of restoring an equilibrium. Having cast a share of the blame on Neckar on account of the deficiency above mentioned, he called forth a triumphant refutation of the charge from that financier, who instead of an answer, received a sentence of exile: Neckar's party therefore, which included the principal writers of the day, the ecclesiastics, and a large portion of the noblesse, joined the opponents of the minister, who was assailed by all the privileged classes throughout the realm. In the exasperation caused by these events, Calonne gave hints of recurring to popular support; and the voice of La Fayette in the secret sittings of the notables was heard, inveighing against the abuses of irresponsible power, and demanding as a remedy the system of popular representation: the minister himself, though he dare not betray such sentiments at court, gave utterance to them in his indignation against the haughty chiefs who opposed his schemes; and they in return accomplished his overthrow: he retired to England; and M. de Brienne, archbishop of Toulouse, was chosen to succeed him: 'as weak a head,' says de Stael, 'as ever was covered by the peruke of a state counsellor.' The triumph of the notables was

<sup>2</sup> One hundred and forty-four persons under this denomination met at Versailles, including the princes of the blood, the chief nobles, the heads of the public bodies, and the deputies of provinces.



not long-lived; for within a month from the dismissal of Calonne, their assembly was dissolved, leaving to Brienne the task of protecting the privileged classes in their immunity from taxation.

The king, now finding it impossible to govern alone, had recourse, like the English monarch Charles I. in a similar predicament, to the parliament of Paris; but that body, elated by this proof of superiority, refused to sanction the new subsidies without an explanation of their purposes: the pretext was plausible, but the intention was to create a contest for power. The king, enraged at this proceeding, used his prerogative in holding a bed of justice; and compelled them to register two edicts for a general land-tax, and a stamp act: but the parliament next day entered a protest on their journals, declaring that whoever should put either of those edicts in force was a traitor; and the king banished them to Troyes in Champagne: a violent outcry was now raised throughout the country; the edicts were laid aside; public business came almost to a stand, and the state was on the verge of bankruptcy: his majesty again summoned the parliament; and on the nineteenth of November, held a *séance royale*, which differed from a bed of justice, as it admitted debates in the royal presence. He now proposed two edicts; one for a succession of loans during five years, amounting in the whole to £19,000,000; and the other for restoring certain privileges to the protestants, who were the principal money-holders. In the debates that ensued, the speakers abused their privilege so far as to insult the king, who had no other resource to fall back on than his exhausted prerogative: he ordered the sitting to be closed, and the edicts registered; when the duke of Orleans stood forth, and denounced the proceedings as contrary to the law; for which he was banished to his estates by a royal order: the parliament at length consented to register a new loan for the supply of pressing necessities, and the archbishop in return promised to convoke a meeting of the states-general within five years. Such was the course of events, in which the revolution advanced with rapid steps; and the privileged orders were obliged to retreat before it. Louis XVI. reformed his court, and dismissed a crowd of placemen; but it was not by such measures that the evils of so many centuries could be repaired.

The continental affairs, in which Great Britain had been concerned, were considered sufficiently important to call parliament together so early as the twenty-seventh of November.



The king, in his speech, expressed great satisfaction, that the disputes in the United Provinces, which not only threatened their constitution, but affected the security and interests of the British dominions, had been so happily arranged; and after alluding to various other topics, he concluded with some reflections on the flourishing state of our revenue, and the advantages that might be expected from the continuance of public tranquillity. The addresses were voted in both houses with great unanimity; Mr. Fox acknowledging, 'that if it were possible for him on the present occasion to refuse his concurrence with the sentiments conveyed by his majesty's speech, or to oppose the motion, he should commit an outrage against all those principles and opinions by which his political career had been uniformly marked:' he declared himself friendly to subsidiary treaties, though he had not sufficient information to enable him to give a decisive opinion on that concluded with Hesse Cassel: he remarked, that the agreement made by the two courts of France and England to disarm, was confined to the naval establishment, though his majesty, at the commencement of the disturbances in Holland, had spoken of augmenting his land forces: why then, he asked, were they not also to be reduced? This led him to notice another part of the speech, in which the maintenance of his majesty's dominions in an adequate state of defence was recommended: he had the honor to be in administration when the peace establishment was settled; and if it were inadequate, blame was due to him and his colleagues: but it had been continued now four years by their successors; and if circumstances rendered it insufficient, doubtless they would be ready to lay those circumstances before the house.

Mr. Pitt, after expressing great satisfaction at the coincidence of Mr. Fox's principles of foreign policy with his own, very justly observed, that with respect to the intended increase of our military establishment for the defence of our distant possessions, he should not consider how far proposed measures might tend to justify or condemn such as had been already adopted; nor should he form a judgment of one administration from the conduct of another: such a practice might be a temptation to ministers to persevere in errors of their own, lest they should appear to acknowledge them; and to abandon the most politic measures of their predecessors, lest they should bear testimony to their wisdom: his principle was to improve what he found well adapted to its object, without regarding the primary arrangement. Whether our military establishment had



been originally too small was not now the question ; but what was the degree of defence actually necessary ? for to that it ought immediately to be raised. Nothing, he observed, tended so much to the continuance of peace, as a state of preparation and defence ; and he acknowledged that the late important crisis had led him to look more carefully into our different establishments, than he had hitherto had occasion or leisure to do : hence his firm persuasion that they were of a less magnitude than the state of affairs required.

The first business brought before the house of commons was a motion for granting one year's subsidy to the landgrave of Hesse Cassel ; on which occasion Mr. Pitt observed, that this was part of a general system of continental connexions, with a view to acquire and maintain that rank among the European states which Great Britain had formerly held ; and he contrasted the respectable figure she had made in recent transactions, with her humiliation in the last war, when she was deserted by every power in Europe. The importance of continental connexions, as well as that of the treaty under consideration, being acknowledged by Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke, the motion was carried unanimously : with respect to an increase of 3064 land forces, which Mr. Fox and his friends strenuously opposed as a censure on their judgment, Mr. Pitt stated that there appeared but three ways of attempting to secure our West Indian islands ; either by a large stationary fleet ; or by sending out succors on the prospect of a rupture ; or by maintaining a force in the islands adequate to a short defence. Experience in the last war showed that a naval force alone could not protect them ; and with regard to the second expedient, not to mention that an attack could be made without any declaration of war ; it might happen that we could not consistently with safety despatch a sufficient force from Europe ; and succors might not arrive in time to prevent the mischief : the last therefore appeared to him the only eligible measure ; and the more so, when he considered the distance intervening between the islands, and the peculiarities of the winds and currents, which often rendered it impossible for a fleet to afford that speedy relief which the occasion might require, unless there was on the island itself a sufficient force to secure it from surprise. Mr. Pitt also proposed some additional fortifications, for which he had the sanction not only of a board of English officers, but of the ablest French engineers ; since every island belonging to that nation was fortified ; and they had even begun to erect works on those which



they took from us in the last war. Not to strengthen this valuable part of our dominions would be to invite the attacks of any hostile power: it would be to spare our wealth, while we were lavish of the prosperity of our empire. These wise sentiments prevailed, and the motion was carried by a majority of 242 votes against 80.

But it was not in our western possessions only that an additional force was required. During the late disputes, when a rupture with France was expected, government had prudently despatched four regiments for the better protection of our East-Indian territories; and even after those disputes were settled, it was determined to render this addition to the military establishment a permanent measure: the directors had acceded to this proposal when originally made by the board of control; and had consented that the troops should be conveyed in the ships, and maintained at the expense of the company. The amicable arrangement, however, lately effected with France, induced them to change their sentiments; and they contended that unless they themselves made the requisition, they were, by lord North's bill of 1781, relieved from the obligation of maintaining any regiments that might be sent to India; and with this opinion the judgment of several eminent lawyers, whom they had consulted, appeared to coincide: on the other hand, Mr. Pitt, supported by the crown lawyers, asserted that the act of 1784 transferred to the board of control all the powers formerly vested in the court of directors, relative to military and political concerns, as well as the collection and application of the revenues; considering those parts of the act of 1781 which were inconsistent with that of 1784, as being by this latter act virtually, if not expressly, repealed.

This different construction laid on the two acts induced Mr. Pitt to apply to parliament for leave to bring in a bill, which might remove any doubts respecting the power of the board of control on the points in question: the motion was, after a long debate, carried without a division; though the bill introduced met with the most decided opposition in all its stages. Among other objections, it was stated, that if it were carried, an army might be established in India without the knowledge or consent of parliament; on which account Mr. Pitt proposed to add a clause limiting the number of troops, for the payment of which the commissioners should be empowered to issue their orders. It was also urged, that the board might apply the revenues of India for the creation of an undue influence, to the prejudice of the company's interests, by the increase of salaries or per-



quisites: the minister therefore proposed two other clauses, prohibiting gratuities, unless recommended by the directors; and stopping all increase of salary, unless proposed by the directors, and submitted to parliament: he also added a fourth, directing that in February every year there should be laid before parliament an account of the receipts, disbursements, and debts of the company. Every real objection to the declaratory act being thus obviated, it passed both houses, though it was accompanied with a protest signed by sixteen peers, reprobating it as friendly to intrigue and cabal, hostile to all good government, and abhorrent to the principles of the British constitution.

After having dwelt so long on the acts of his ministers, it will scarcely be thought inconsistent with the scope of history, if we briefly advert to the domestic life and manners of the monarch: it was in this year that his majesty addressed his celebrated letters to Arthur Young, on different subjects of practical agriculture; but neither his rural occupations, nor the manly pleasures of the chase, which he pursued with uncommon ardor, prevented him from observing with extreme concern the dissoluteness which was beginning to prevail in the nation: feeling it therefore a duty incumbent on him to exert all his authority for the suppression of this evil, he announced his determination to discountenance or punish breaches of morals in all ranks, especially among such persons as were employed about the court or in the government: one of the first steps taken by him in prosecution of this design, was to reissue the proclamation against vice, which had been published on his accession to the throne: he also called on the upper classes to set a good example, by attending more strictly to the offices of divine worship; and he earnestly enjoined the magistracy to punish and prevent all breaches of the sabbath-day: in fact, the habitual piety of the king was one of the most striking features in his character; very early manifested, and remaining with him, bright and glowing, to the last. Though a steady friend and zealous advocate of toleration, he was more especially anxious for the prosperity of the established church, which for a long period before his reign had little help from high example, and little honor at court: at the same time, every institution, which had for its object the diffusion of christianity, received the munificent support of his majesty. A greater number of societies for the promotion of religion and knowlege, and for the relief of human misery, were established during his reign, and chiefly under his patronage,



than in the whole previous period since the Reformation in England; and it was chiefly owing to an interesting conversation which he held with the benevolent Howard respecting the wretched state of our prisons, that felons were this year transported to Botany Bay in New South Wales: above all, this benevolent sovereign did not fail to add examples of charity to the precepts which he laid down for improving the morals of his subjects: many were his munificent acts towards the poor of Windsor; nor was his eye directed solely to the unmerited sufferings of poverty in his own vicinity, as the following anecdote will show. Among the several returns made to the house of commons, in compliance with Mr. Gilbert's bill, was one from a poor Welsh curate, who, after detailing the calamities of his neighbors, thus concluded his account:—'But their distresses cannot be greater than my own: I have a wife far advanced in pregnancy; I have around me nine poor children, for whom I never yet could procure shoe or stocking; it is with difficulty I can supply them with bread: my income is thirty-five pounds per annum, for which I do the duty of four parishes.' This letter being shown to his majesty, he ordered an immediate inquiry to be made into the character of the curate; and finding it unexceptionable, he not only provided for some of his family, but allowed him fifty pounds per annum out of his privy purse. The domestic life of the royal family at this period is described, by those who had the honor of witnessing it, as affording a perfect specimen of calm and rational enjoyment intermingled with a faithful discharge of the social duties: his majesty rose very early; visited the house of God; and after the regular despatch of business, divided the day between manly amusements, frugal repasts, and domestic pleasures in the circle of his family, where, divesting himself of the pomp and cares of royalty, he could indulge in all the tenderness and affection natural to his character.<sup>3</sup> It may be remarked, that most of the qualities which George III. possessed, of the dispositions which he

<sup>3</sup> It is thus described in a letter of Mrs. Delany, dated May 17, 1787. 'At this time of the year the evenings are devoted by them to the terrace till eight o'clock, when they return to the Lodge to their tea and concert of music. Happy those who are admitted to that circle! Most evenings, at half-past seven, I go to Miss Burney's apartments; and when the royal family return from the terrace, the king or one of the princesses (generally the youngest princess, Amelia) comes into the room, takes me by the hand, and leads me into the drawing-room, where there is a chair



cherished, and of the virtues which he practised, were imitable and attainable by all classes : they were such as every genuine Englishman would wish to cultivate in himself, and in all most dear to him : accordingly, they produced a very striking effect on the people whom he governed ; furnishing an invaluable standard of practical excellence, to counteract the evil consequences of an unprecedented advance in wealth, luxury, and power.

In February, this year, two bishops were consecrated for the British colonies in America ; and in October, the public service sustained a severe loss by the death of the duke of Rutland, during his viceroyalty, in Ireland : this disinterested and patriotic nobleman was possessed of great judgment in the conduct of affairs, and administered his high office in a liberal spirit of policy ; wishing neither to aggrandise Great Britain by the ruin of Ireland, nor to advance the prosperity of Ireland at the expense of Great Britain : his funeral in Dublin was public, and conducted with great pomp and magnificence. This year, the corps of engineers, hitherto deemed a civil establishment, was made military, and directed to rank with the artillery : banks also were for the first time established in the East Indies.

ready for me by the queen's left hand : the three eldest princesses sit round the table with the ladies in waiting : a vacant chair is left for the king, whenever he pleases to sit down : every one is employed with pencil, needle, or knotting. Between the pieces of music the conversation is easy and pleasant ; and for an hour before the conclusion of the whole, the king plays at backgammon with one of his equerries, and I am dismissed.

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## CHAP. XXXI.

## GEORGE III. (CONTINUED.)—1788.

Trial of Warren Hastings—Burke's opening speeches, &c.—Debates—First article of impeachment opened by Fox—Second by Mr. Adam—Sheridan's speech—Burke's opinion of its eloquence, &c.—Charge against Sir Elijah Impey—Additions made to the bill for trying controverted elections—The budget, and flourishing state of the revenue—Mr. Pitt's plan for liquidating the claims of American loyalists—Question of the slave trade taken up by the public—Society formed, at the head of which is Mr. Wilberforce—Petitions—Committee of the privy council—Opposition to the design of abolishing slavery—The question taken up by Mr. Pitt—Sir William Dolben's motion for alleviating the suffering of slaves on the passage—Supported by Mr. Pitt, and carried—Treaties of alliance between Great Britain, the United Provinces, and Prussia—Object of them—Retirement of lord Mansfield from the bench—Derangement of his majesty—Conduct of the privy council and the two houses of parliament on this occasion—Death of the speaker—Regency bill introduced into the house of commons—The king's recovery, and national demonstrations of joy.

IN the early part of this session the commons had appointed a committee of management for the impeachment of Mr. Hastings; and on the thirteenth of February, the trial commenced with every solemnity that the forms of official dignity could impart. Mr. Burke, at the head of the managers, all in full court dress, led the way to Westminster-hall, followed by the members of the house of commons and their officers, the judges of the land, the peers spiritual and temporal, and the members of the royal family: the state on this occasion clothed itself with all its majesty; and the person brought before its august tribunal was worthy of such solemn preparation; for Warren Hastings had been the grand support of British supremacy in the most perilous crisis which our eastern empire ever experienced.

The first two days of this celebrated trial were occupied in the arrangement of ceremonials. Mr. Hastings, having been called into court, was addressed by the lord chancellor in the following terms:—‘Warren Hastings, you stand at the bar of



this court, charged with high crimes and misdemeanors, a copy of which has been delivered to you: you have been allowed counsel, and a long time for your defence: but this is not to be considered as a particular indulgence to you, as it arises from the necessity of the case; the crimes charged against you being stated as having been committed in a distant place. These charges contain the most weighty allegations, and come from the highest authority: this circumstance, however, though it carries with it the most serious importance, is not to prevent you from making your defence in a firm and collected manner; in the confidence, that as a British subject, you are entitled to, and will receive, full justice from a British court.' To this address Mr. Hastings answered,—'My lords, I am come to this high tribunal, equally impressed with a confidence in my own integrity, and in the justice of the court before which I stand.'

The anxiety of the public to hear Mr. Burke speak on so vast and important a subject brought an immense concourse of hearers into the hall: the court was assembled to the number of 164 peers; and on the third day, the chancellor having called on the managers to proceed, Mr. Burke rose to perform the arduous task which had been delegated to him, and opened the impeachment by the following observations:—

'My lords, the gentlemen who have it in command to support the impeachment against Mr. Hastings, have directed me to open the cause with a general view of the grounds on which the commons have proceeded in their charge against him: they have directed me to accompany this with another general view of the extent, the magnitude, the nature, and the effect of the crimes which they allege to have been by him committed. They have also directed me to give an explanation of such circumstances preceding the crimes charged on Mr. Hastings, or concomitant with them, as may tend to elucidate whatever is obscure in the articles: to those they have wished me to add a few illustrative remarks on the laws, customs, opinions, and manners of the people who are the objects of the crimes which we charge on Mr. Hastings.'

On this foundation was raised a long series of intellectual efforts, which rendered the whole trial an exhibition of elegant learning, of legal knowledge, and of oratorical ability, unequalled in the annals of history. The chief weight of it lay on Mr. Burke, who had devoted himself to the cause with unwearied assiduity, studying all its details and mastering its substance with the most energetic and comprehensive sagacity:



the lustre which his ardent feelings and his vivid eloquence threw over the dry details of Indian policy, was even eclipsed by the acuteness with which he enforced every strong argument and detected every weak point, under the complicated difficulties of foreign concealment and of European technicalities: nor was much less impression made by those fine philosophic reflections with which his speeches abounded; and which, derived as they were from a long and profound study of human nature, gave an inestimable value to all his productions; rendering them monuments of eloquence and wisdom, for the instruction of orators and statesmen, to the end of time.

Having held up Mr. Hastings as a monster of iniquity, the orator concluded with a peroration, in which he briefly adverted to the magnitude of the cause, the notoriety of the criminal, the solemnity of the tribunal, and that glorious array of prosecutors, the commons of England, who, though separated from a remote people by the material bounds and barriers of nature, were so united by the bonds of a social and moral community, as to resent the indignities and cruelties offered to the people of India, as if they were their own: he then impeached Warren Hastings of high crimes and misdemeanors in the name of those commons, whose parliamentary trust he had betrayed, and whose national character he had dishonored: he impeached him in the name of that Indian people, whose laws, rights, and liberties he had subverted, whose property he had destroyed, and whose country he had rendered desolate: he impeached him in the name, and by virtue of those eternal laws of justice, which he had violated; in the name of human nature itself, which he had cruelly outraged and oppressed, in both sexes, in every age, rank, situation, and condition.

This speech, the beauty of which was considerably disfigured by inordinate exaggeration and invective, occupied three hours for four days successively: a debate then ensued respecting the manner in which the defence should be conducted; and it was resolved that, according to the usual practice in trials, the prosecutor should complete his case before the accused commenced his defence. Mr. Fox then opened the first article of impeachment on the twenty-second, and was supported by Mr. Grey,<sup>4</sup> whose talents at a very early period of life attracted great attention from the house: the evidence was then brought forward, and the whole was

<sup>4</sup> The present earl Grey.



summed up by Mr. Anstruther on the eleventh of April. Mr. Adam, on the fifteenth of the same month, opened the second accusation respecting the begums of Oude, the evidence on which was summed up by Mr. Sheridan with transcendent ability. This charge he had already enforced with extraordinary talent in the house of commons; and Mr. Fox, it is said, hopeless of any second flight ever rising to the grand elevation of the first, advised that the former speech should be, with very little alteration, repeated:<sup>5</sup> but the fountain of his friend's eloquence was far from being exhausted; and, confident in the resources both of his argumentative and imaginative powers, he poured forth a new and copious stream, which during four successive days diffused a species of enchantment among one of the most brilliant assemblages ever collected within a court of justice; and of which Mr. Burke declared, at its conclusion; 'that no species of oratory, no kind of eloquence, that had been heard in ancient or modern times; nothing which the acuteness of the bar, the dignity of the senate, or the morality of the pulpit could furnish; was equal to what they had that day heard in Westminster-hall: that there was not a species of composition, of which a complete and perfect specimen might not be culled out of this speech; which, he was persuaded, had left too strong an impression on the minds of that assembly to be easily obliterated.' The outline of this charge has been already given; and, as Mr. Moore observes, 'it was not only the strongest, and susceptible of the strongest coloring; but it had also the advantage of grouping together all the principal delinquents of the trial, and affording a gradation of hue, from the showy and prominent enormities of the governor-general and Sir Elijah Impey in the front of the picture, to the subordinate and half-tint iniquity of the Middletons and Bristows in the back-ground.'<sup>6</sup> Having, in the exordium of his celebrated harangue, dwelt with great energy and force on the importance of the inquiry, and also endeavored to conciliate the court by a warm tribute to the purity of English justice; he proceeded to attack the ready equivocation and disavowal of his own expressions, used by Mr.

<sup>5</sup> Moore's Life of Sheridan, vol. i. p. 480.

<sup>6</sup> 'It appears,' says Mr. Sheridan's biographer, 'that Burke had at first reserved this grand part in the drama for himself; but finding that Sheridan had also fixed his mind on it, he without hesitation resigned it into his hands; thus proving the sincerity of his zeal in the cause, by sacrificing even the vanity of talent to its success.'



Hastings in regard to his defence.<sup>7</sup> With great animation he described the feelings of eastern people with respect to the unapproachable sanctity of their zenanas; severely animadverted on the governor's exaction of so enormous a present as £100,000; and finely anticipated the plea of state necessity which would probably be set up: he described in the most vivid manner that swarm of English pensioners and placemen, who were still, in violation of the late purchased treaty, left to prey on the finances of the nabob: he exposed the ready and corrupt agents of the governor's exactions; and then descended to the following description of the desolation which the misgovernment of colonel Hannay, one of those agents, had brought on some of the provinces of Oude. 'If we could suppose a person to have come suddenly into the country, unacquainted with any circumstances that had passed since the days of Sujah ul Dowla, he would naturally ask, what cruel hand has wrought this wide desolation; what barbarian foe has invaded the country, has desolated its fields, depopulated its villages? He would ask, what disputed succession, civil rage, or frenzy of the inhabitants, had induced them to act in hostility to the words of God, and the beauteous works of man? He would ask, what religious zeal or frenzy had added to the mad despair and horrors of war? The ruin is unlike any thing that appears recorded in any age; it looks like neither the barbarities of men, nor the judgments of vindictive Heaven. There is a waste of desolation, as if caused by fell destroyers, never meaning to return, and making but a short period of their rapacity: it looks as if some fabled monster had forced its passage through the country, whose pestiferous breath had blasted more than its voracious appetite could devour. If there had been any men in that country, who had not their hearts and souls so subdued by fear, as to refuse to speak the truth at all on such a subject; they would have told him, there had been no war since the days of Sujah ul Dowla, tyrant indeed as he was, but then deeply regretted by his

<sup>7</sup> At the commencement of the prosecution, he delivered at the bar of the commons, as his own, a written refutation of the charges; declaring that 'if truth could tend to convict him, he was content to be himself the channel to convey it:' but afterwards, on finding that he had imprudently committed himself, he disclaimed this document at the bar of the lords, and brought major Scott to prove that it had been drawn up by Messrs. Shore, Middleton, and others; that he had never seen it, and therefore ought not to be held accountable for its contents.



subjects ;—that no hostile blow of any enemy had been struck in the land ;—that there had been no disputed succession, no civil war, no religious frenzy ; but that these were the tokens of British friendship, marks left by the embraces of British allies, more dreadful than the blows of the bitterest enemy : they would tell him, that these allies had converted a prince into a slave, to make him the principal in extortion on his subjects ; that their rapacity had increased, in proportion as the means of supplying their avarice diminished ; that they made the sovereign pay, as if they had a right to an increased price, because the labor of extortion and plunder increased. To such causes they would tell him these calamities were owing.'

A passage in the second day's speech, says Mr. Moore, is remarkable, as exhibiting a sort of tourney of intellect between Sheridan and Burke, in that field of abstract speculation which was the favorite arena of the latter : it alluded to a remark made by Mr. Burke, in opening the prosecution ; that prudence is a quality incompatible with vice, and can never be effectively enlisted in its cause : that no man who is bad, can be fit for service that is good. 'It is a noble and a lovely sentiment,' said Mr. Sheridan, 'worthy the mind of him who uttered it ; worthy that proud disdain, that generous scorn of the means and instruments of vice, which virtue and genius must ever feel : but I should doubt whether we can read the history of a Philip of Macedon, a Cæsar, or a Cromwell, without confessing that there have been evil purposes, baneful to the peace and to the rights of men, conducted, if I may not say with prudence or with wisdom, yet with awful craft, and with most successful and commanding subtlety. If however I might make a distinction, I should say that it is the proud attempt to mix a variety of lordly crimes, that unsettles the prudence of the mind, and breeds this distraction of the brain : one master passion, domineering in the breast, may win the faculties of the understanding to advance its purpose, and direct to that object every thing which thought or human knowledge can effect ; but to succeed, it must maintain a solitary despotism in the mind ; each rival profligacy must stand aloof, or wait in abject vassalage on its throne ; for the Power that has not forbidden the entrance of evil passions into man's mind, has at least forbidden their union : if they meet, they defeat their object ; and their conquest, or their attempt at it, is tumult. Turn to the virtues—how different the decree ! Formed to connect, to blend, to associate, and to co-operate ; bearing the same course, with kindred energies and harmonious sympathy ;



each perfect in its own lovely sphere, each moving in its wider or more contracted orbit, with different but concentrating powers; guided by the same influence of reason, and endeavoring at the same blessed end—the happiness of the individual, the harmony of the species, and the glory of the Creator! In the vices, on the other hand, it is the discord that ensures the defeat: each clamors to be heard in its own barbarous language; each claims the exclusive cunning of the brain; each thwarts and reproaches the other: and even while their fell rage assails with common hate the peace and virtue of the world, the civil war among their own tumultuous legions defeats the purpose of the foul conspiracy. These are the furies of the mind, my lords, that unsettle the understanding; these are the furies that destroy the virtue of prudence; while the distracted brain and shivered intellect proclaim the tumult that is within; and bear their testimonies, from the mouth of God himself, to the foul condition of the heart.'

That part of the speech which occupied the third day, consisted chiefly of comments on the irrelevancy and inconsistency of the affidavits taken before Sir Elijah Impey; in which the dryness of detail was enlivened by much playful humor: but it was on the fourth day of the oration, that he rose into his loftiest flights of eloquence; and left on record delineations of character, passion, and sentiment, as imperishable as the language in which they were spoken. In reference to the correspondence of the governor and his agent, he launched forth into the following beautiful description of filial affection, which it would be unpardonable to omit:—

'When I see in many of these letters the infirmities of age made a subject of mockery and ridicule; when I see the feelings of a son treated by Mr. Middleton as puerile and contemptible; when I see an order given from Mr. Hastings to harden that son's heart, and to choke the struggles of nature in his bosom; when I see them pointing to the son's name and to his standard, while marching to oppress the mother, as to a banner that gives dignity, that gives a holy sanction and a reverence to their enterprise; when I see and hear these things done; when I hear them brought into three deliberate defences set up against the charges of the commons;—my lords, I own I grow puzzled and confounded, and almost begin to doubt whether, where such a defence can be offered, it may not be tolerated. And yet, my lords, how can I support the claim of filial love by argument; much less the affections of a son to a mother, where love loses its awe, and veneration is



mixed with tenderness? What can I say on such a subject? What can I do, but repeat the ready truths, which, with the quick impulse of the mind, must spring to the lips of every man on such a theme? Filial love! the moral of instinct, the sacrament of nature and duty; or rather, let me say, it is mis-called a duty; for it flows from the heart without effort, and is its delight, its indulgence, its enjoyment. It is guided, not by the slow dictates of reason; it awaits not encouragement from reflection or from thought; it asks no aid of memory: it is an innate, but active consciousness, of having been the object of a thousand tender solitudes, a thousand waking watchful cares, of meek anxiety and patient sacrifices, unremarked and unrequited by the object: it is a gratitude founded on a conviction of obligations, not remembered, but more binding because not remembered; because conferred before the tender reason could acknowledge, or the infant memory record them; a gratitude and affection, which no circumstances should subdue, and which few can strengthen; a gratitude, in which even injury from the object, though it may blend regret, should never breed resentment; an affection, which can be increased only by the decay of those to whom we owe it; and which is then most fervent, when the tremulous voice of age, resistless in its feebleness, inquires for the natural protector of its cold decline.

‘If these are the general sentiments of man; what must be their depravity, what must be their degeneracy, who can blot out and erase from the bosom the virtue that is most deeply rooted in the human heart, and twined within the cords of life itself? Aliens from nature, apostates from humanity! And yet, if there be a crime more fell, more foul; if there be any thing worse than a wilful persecutor of his mother; it is that of a deliberate instigator and abettor to the deed: this it is that shocks, disgusts, and appals the mind, more than the other; to view, not a wilful parricide, but a parricide by compulsion; a miserable wretch, not actuated by the stubborn evils of his own worthless heart, not driven by the fury of his own distracted brain; but lending his sacrilegious hand, without any malice of his own, to answer the abandoned purposes of the human fiends that have subdued his will! To condemn crimes like these, we need not talk of laws, or of human rules: their foulness, their deformity, does not depend on local constitutions, on human institutes, or religious creeds: they are crimes, and the persons who perpetrate them are monsters, who violate the primitive condition, on which the



earth was given to man : they are guilty by the general verdict of human kind.'

In the peroration to this magnificent speech, which, however, was considered by Mr. Fox and others inferior to that made by the same orator in the house of commons, he skilfully contrived, says his biographer, that the same sort of appeal to the purity of British justice, with which it opened, should, like the repetition of a solemn strain of music, recur at its close ; leaving in the minds of the judges a composed and concentrated feeling of the great public duty which they had to perform. The court of directors had ordered an inquiry into the conduct of the begums, with a view to the restoration of their property, if it should appear that the charges against them were unfounded : but to this proceeding Mr. Hastings had objected, on the ground that these princesses themselves had not called for such interference ; and that it was inconsistent with the 'majesty of justice,' to volunteer her services. The pompous and jesuitical style in which this doctrine was laid down by the governor-general, in a letter to Mr. Macpherson, was very ingeniously turned to account by the orator, in winding up his masterly statement ; 'and if nothing,' says Mr. Mill, 'remained to stain the reputation of Warren Hastings but the principles avowed in this singular pleading ; his character, among the friends of justice, would be sufficiently determined.'

This was the last charge against the governor that came before the court in the present session of parliament ; but another accusation of Indian delinquency was brought before the commons in the conduct of Sir Elijah Impey, who, as it was stated, had corruptly added his new powers to the very force which they were intended to control ; and taken an active part in the oppressions, which it was his duty to avenge. Sir Gilbert Elliot presented to the house six distinct articles of accusation against this magistrate, after having in a very eloquent speech supported two general principles :—that India must be redressed or lost ; and that the only mode left for redress was the punishment of some great and signal delinquents.

The first of these articles related to the trial and execution of Nuncomar ; the last to the conduct of the chief justice in Oude and Benares, where he was designated as the governor's principal agent in the oppression of the begums. Sir Elijah, on his defence, contended, that, in the acts with which he was



charged, he had not exceeded the powers entrusted to him. Respecting the first and most important accusation, the trial and execution of Nuncomar for forgery; he had been charged with extra-judicial interference, as condemning to death a person who was not subject to the jurisdiction of a British court; while, by the laws of India, forgery is not a capital crime: in answer to this, he argued, that although the authority of the supreme court did not extend over all the British provinces in India, it included the inhabitants of Calcutta; that Nuncomar had not been tried as a native of Bengal, but as a citizen of Calcutta, where he resided, and to the laws of which he was strictly amenable. As this mode of reasoning appeared satisfactory to the house, the first charge was negatived by a majority of seventy-three against fifty-five; and the others were not taken into consideration.

This year, Mr. Grenville proposed and carried certain amendments and additions to his father's bill for better regulating the trial of controverted elections: the principal of these related to the interruption of public business by frivolous petitions; and it was now determined that the committee should have the power of adjudging the payment of costs against the party that was to blame.

On the sixth of May, Mr. Pitt proposed his budget for the year, and expressed great satisfaction at the flourishing state of the finances. Although some extraordinary expenses had been incurred by the events of last year; yet such was the improved condition of the revenue, that it afforded means of providing for all the services which had been voted, without any loan or new taxes, and without the least interruption to the action of the sinking fund: hence it was evident, that our financial concerns were in a state of progressive improvement: indeed, this was ascertained by fact and experience: the revenue of 1783 amounted to £10,000,000, beside the malt and land tax; and the revenue of 1787, with the same exclusion, amounted to £13,000,000: the additional imposts had not exceeded £1,500,000; hence the other £1,500,000 must have arisen from the suppression of smuggling, the better collection of the revenue, and the increase of commerce: he was about to adopt farther regulations for the prevention of fraud, while commerce was extending itself in all its branches; so that he augured a still greater excess of receipt above the national expenditure. Mr. Sheridan attempted to controvert these statements; but it was evident that financial computations were



not within the latitude of his genius. In the supplies 18,000 seamen were voted, and about 20,000 land forces, beside those that were on foreign service.

Soon after the conclusion of peace, commissioners had been appointed to inquire into the losses of the American loyalists; and their labors being nearly brought to a conclusion, Mr. Pitt, on the sixth of June, submitted to the house a plan of liquidation. Resting these claims, not on the ground of strict justice, but on that of national generosity and compassion, he endeavored to mark this distinction in the arrangement he had formed; and with that view he had divided the loyalists into three classes: first, those who resided in America at the beginning of the war, and from motives of duty to their sovereign had abandoned their estates and property; secondly, those who, at the commencement of the war, had been resident in England, and consequently had not been driven from America; thirdly, those who, having enjoyed places or exercised professions in America, were compelled to leave that country by the war. With regard to the first two classes, he proposed to pay to such the whole of their claims, if they did not exceed £10,000; and beyond that sum to deduct from them a *per centage*, greater in the case of the second class than in that of the first: to individuals of the third class, since they were able to obtain fresh incomes by the exertion of their talents, he proposed to allow pensions, proportional to the incomes which they had relinquished; those whose income had not exceeded £400, receiving one half by way of annuity. All the different claims, thus calculated, would amount to £1,228,239, exclusive of about £500,000, which had been already advanced at different periods. At the same time, Mr. Pitt submitted to the house the case of the East Florida claimants, who had been obliged to quit their habitations and property when their country was ceded to Spain: as their losses had arisen from the voluntary act of our government, the minister very justly thought that they ought to be completely indemnified; and the sum required for this purpose was found to amount to £113,952. He proposed that all these sums should be paid by instalments; and that the money should be raised by the profits of a lottery, to be continued yearly till the whole should be liquidated; negociable debentures being immediately issued, bearing an interest of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. This plan, which was highly satisfactory to the persons concerned, met with the decided approbation of parliament; and every part of the



arrangement was executed, to the lasting honor, both of the minister and of the nation.

In an enlightened age, it may appear more surprising that any advocate should be found for the continuance of a traffic in slaves, than that a large portion of the public should wish for the abolition of a practice so disgraceful to humanity. The honor of first taking up the cause of the oppressed negro, both in America and England, belongs to the sect of people called quakers: being embraced by the enthusiasm of religion and benevolence, it soon acquired votaries; and was recommended by the most eminent divines, and by philanthropic writers, among churchmen as well as dissenters. An opinion was eagerly disseminated, that acquiescence in a state of slavery was incompatible with a sincere profession of christianity; and a topic repeatedly enforced, was, that difference of color is no reason for the forfeiture of liberty. While sympathy was excited, not only by speculative opinions on the evils of slavery in general, but by accounts of the horrid treatment which the unfortunate victims of it too often received from the brutality of their owners, a society was formed, and a considerable sum of money raised, with a view to collect information on the subject, and to support the expense of an application to parliament for its abolition; which, it was not doubted, would meet with all the resistance that self-interest could inspire. At the head of this party was Mr. Wilberforce, one of the members in parliament for the county of York; a gentleman of pious principles, indefatigable industry, and extensive information; who stood deservedly high in public opinion, as one who directed the advantages of fortune and influence to such pursuits as he thought conducive to virtue and the happiness of his fellow creatures. Conceiving the cause of the African slaves to be that of religion and humanity, and being desirous of reconciling political expediency with a discharge of christian and moral duty, he entered with great perseverance and minuteness into the revolting details of this traffic, in order that he might make himself master of a subject, which he foresaw would employ the greater part of his life; and at an early period of the present year, he mentioned in the house his intention of making a motion respecting it during the course of the session. The consequence of this was, that numerous petitions were presented from the counties, and most of the important towns of England; the general prayer of which was, that so nefarious a traffic might be abolished; and a committee of privy-council



was appointed, on the recommendation of Mr. Pitt, to inquire into the facts and allegations which they contained.

While one party, however, exerted itself strenuously to render the abolition of slavery a popular question, another labored equally hard in opposing the design; and attempted to prove that the advantages sought were ideal, founded on abstract theories of philanthropy, without any knowledge of the real state of the case. With regard to the supposed opposition of slavery to christianity, it was asserted, that the religion of Christ, seeking the ultimate happiness of man, finds its sources in individual disposition and character: that, comprehending all varieties of situation and sentiment, it delivers general rules, enforced by powerful motives, for the different duties of life; leaving political establishments to be formed, as external circumstances and the character of a people may determine. The evil of slavery itself was said to depend on opinion; and such a state being prevalent in Africa, the minds of the negro inhabitants were habituated to its contemplation, and regarded it as a common condition of life: in fact, it was asserted, the people in that quarter of the world had ever been in a state of warfare, where the victors always butchered the vanquished, until it was found that they could make a profit by selling them to European dealers: whence it followed, that slavery, so far from being such an evil as it was represented, was comparatively a good, inasmuch as life in such circumstances was preferable to death. Besides, it was said that the severities so much spoken of were mostly ideal; for although individual instances might occur in which the malignant passions were let loose, yet severity in general was not the interest of the planters; and the recurrence of cruel acts might be prevented by judicious regulations: the indolent and improvident habits of the negro were also dilated on; and it was shown, that, by placing him in a state where he was secure from the horrors of that famine by which he so often suffered in his native country, you placed him in a higher condition, according to his estimate of human good. Nor was an appeal to the interests and comforts of Europeans forgotten: the culture of the West Indian islands, it was said, depends on laborers inured to such a climate; and if we were to forego the advantages of those possessions, what would be the consequences? Would not other European states seize on that which we had abandoned; and should we not be sacrificing our political greatness, as well as large capitals of individuals, embarked in



advantageous commerce, by this deference to visionary theories, unfounded in fact or experience?

Thus stood the question, when Mr. Pitt, in consequence of an illness which prevented Mr. Wilberforce from making his intended motion, moved the following resolution, on the ninth of May:—‘That this house will, early in the next session, take into consideration the circumstances of the slave trade complained of in the petitions presented to parliament, and what may seem fit to be done:’ he also added, that before that time, the inquiry instituted by the privy-council would be brought to a conclusion; the result of which might facilitate their inquiries: he also pledged himself to submit the question to the house, in case the state of his honorable friend’s health should not allow him to propose it. Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke expressed great concern at the delay, and at the same time severely reprobated the inquiry carried on before the privy-council; contending that it ought to have taken place before the house of commons, whose duty it was rather to advise the king, than to ask for his advice: the motion, however, was carried unanimously.

During the foregoing discussion, Sir William Dolben called the attention of the house to an evil which demanded an immediate remedy: he alluded, not to the sufferings of the slaves at the hands of their own countrymen, or of their unfeeling masters in the plantations; but to that intermediate state of tenfold misery which they endured in their passage from the coast of Africa to the West Indies. When put on ship-board, these unfortunate beings were chained together hand and foot: the length allotted to each slave was five feet and a half, and the breadth sixteen inches; the distance between the deck, or floor, on which the wretched creatures lay, from the platform on which other bodies were spread, being little more than two feet. Thus crammed together, in a hot climate, they generated putrid disorders and other dangerous diseases; so that when the overseers in the morning came to examine this freight of misery, they daily had to pick out numbers of the dead, and to unchain the carcasses from their fellow-sufferers to whom they had been fastened. Nor did the crews of the slave-vessels escape the mortality thus produced; for great numbers of the seamen employed in the horrid traffic died every voyage; so that if some instant remedy were not applied, 10,000 lives might be lost before the next meeting. This statement made a strong impression on the house; and towards the end of the month, Sir William introduced a bill to regulate the passage of



slaves in British vessels, and to limit their number in proportion to the tonnage of the vessel; also to require an account of slaves received on board, as well as of deaths, from the surgeon, attested on oath; and compelling the captains to use proper precautions for the preservation of their health. Strange to say, petitions were presented against this humane act of legislation by the merchants of Liverpool, Bristol, and London, stating the injury they must necessarily suffer from the proposed regulations. In this cause counsel was employed and witnesses examined; but the facts reluctantly drawn from those who were brought forward in support of the present system, were so decisive against it, that the friends of the bill declined calling any evidence of their own. Mr. Pitt observed, that the trade, as then carried on, was contrary to every humane, every christian principle; and he indignantly exclaimed, that if it could not be transacted in any other manner, he would retract what he said on a former day, and give his vote for the instant suppression of so revolting a traffic. He exhorted the house, since they were now possessed of information never before exhibited, to extricate themselves from that guilt and remorse, which every man must feel, for having so long overlooked such cruelties inflicted on human beings, in the course of a trade carried on by British subjects, under the express authority of former parliaments. He felt confident that the house would support him in any measure to rescue, as speedily as possible, these miserable objects from the iron hand of unrelenting avarice: he should, therefore, propose a clause, rendering every slave-ship, which had already sailed from England, subject to the regulations of the bill, provided the captain was made acquainted with them; for which purpose he should think it proper to despatch a quick-sailing vessel, with copies of the act, to the coast of Africa; and he trusted the house would make compensation to the merchants who might thereby receive any pecuniary loss; an object of no consideration, when the interests of humanity were so intimately concerned. With the hope of exciting greater attention to the preservation of the slaves, he also proposed another clause, granting certain bounties to the owners and surgeons of ships, in which the mortality should not exceed certain proportions during the voyage.<sup>8</sup> The bill, with these additions, passed the commons, after two divisions, with minorities of only five and two: it also passed the lords, but

<sup>8</sup> Two and three in the hundred.



not without considerable opposition, especially from lords Thurlow and Sidney, and the duke of Chandos: it was to continue in force till August, 1789; before which time it was hoped something more effective would be substituted in its place.

Mr. Pitt did not fail to profit by the favorable termination of the disputes in Holland: on the fifteenth of April, he entered into a treaty of alliance with the States-General, for the maintenance of general tranquillity, as well as for the good of both contracting parties. This treaty embraced a mutual guarantee of their dominions, a security for the existing form of government in the United Provinces, and regulations by which the commerce of each country was placed on the footing of the most favored nations: on the same day, a similar document was signed at Berlin, between the United Provinces and Prussia; and on the thirteenth of June, a provisional treaty of defensive alliance was concluded at Loo between the kings of Great Britain and Prussia; in which, beside the usual articles of mutual agreement, the contracting parties bound themselves to act at all times in concert, for the maintenance of the security, independence, and government of the United Provinces. The object of these treaties was not so much to preserve the balance of power against the influence of France, as to counteract any ambitious attempts which might be made against it by the emperor of Austria and the empress of Russia, who had recently entered into a close union of counsels. Indeed, the internal state of France, at this period, rendered her incapable, not only of disturbing the peace of her neighbors, but of assisting them in case of attack from any other quarter: from this very circumstance, therefore, arose the necessity of providing a barrier against that dangerous alliance which had been formed between the two imperial courts; and which, from its opposition to their former policy, as well as from the character of the present sovereigns, could be attributed to no other motives but those of conquest and aggrandisement. The war, which they were jointly carrying on against the Ottoman empire, tended strongly to confirm this opinion; and there was reason to suspect that, if successful, they would afterwards direct their hostile views to other quarters of Europe. The conduct which Great Britain might adopt at this period, was a matter of great political anxiety: while some supposed, that, inspired by resentment at the conduct of Russia in the armed neutrality, she would now oppose the schemes of that power; others argued, that she would take this opportunity of pro-



curing more beneficial commercial arrangements from Russia, by seconding its favorite projects. In her final determination, however, she was actuated neither by the spirit of resentment, nor of commercial gain : it was the result of that policy, which alone could justify her interference in continental affairs ; the maintenance of a balance of power for the security and independence of the European states.

During the recess of parliament, the venerable earl of Mansfield, being anxious to enjoy a short interval of repose after so many years of labor, retired from the high office which he had long filled with honor to himself and advantage to the public. He had presided in the court of king's bench for more than a quarter of a century, at a period when the British nation was rapidly increasing in commerce and wealth, and when the progressive state of society required the adaptation of existing laws to circumstances and cases never before contemplated. For effecting this he was eminently qualified, both by nature and education : he had profoundly studied history, ethics, and the philosophy of jurisprudence, as well as the principles of civil law, on which the judicial institutions of so many European states are founded : being likewise endowed with a penetrating and comprehensive intellect, which inclined more to a constructive than to a literal interpretation of the law, he quickly perceived whether a case was new ; and if so, by what general principles or analogy its merits were to be determined. Thus, out of slender materials, he digested an admirable system of commercial jurisprudence ; whilst all his decisions in the reparation of injuries and the confirmation of civil rights, appear to have been the result of combined knowledge, wisdom, and equity. He was succeeded on the bench by Sir Lloyd Kenyon, master of the rolls, who was called up to the house of peers by the title of lord Kenyon.

In the early part of this summer, the king's health was found to have suffered considerably by political anxiety, close application to business, and the custom of taking violent exercise : accordingly, on the day following the prorogation of parliament, he went to Cheltenham, by the advice of his physicians ; but did not derive the expected benefit from its medicinal waters. On the sixteenth of August, he returned to Windsor, where his disorder took a very unfortunate turn ; for symptoms of mental derangement occasionally appeared, which gradually increased, until he was no longer capable of attending to public business : at the same time, the paroxysms of the malady, accompanied as they were with bilious affections,



brought on so violent a fever, that for several days his majesty's life was in imminent danger, and he became totally and constantly deprived of the use of reason. Ministers had intended that parliament should not meet till after Christmas ; but as it had been prorogued to the twentieth of November, and the king was unable, from the continuance of his mental disorder, to order a commission for a farther prorogation, circular letters were issued, requesting the attendance of members on that day. When they had assembled, the state of his majesty's health was formally notified to the house of peers by the lord chancellor, and to the commons by Mr. Pitt, who, after intimating the propriety of omitting all discussion of public business under present circumstances, concluded by moving that they should adjourn to the fourth of December, for which day a call of the house should take place ; and if his majesty's disorder unfortunately continued, they might then consider what measures ought to be adopted. This proposal was immediately acceded to ; and a similar motion passed in the house of peers, at the instance of lord Camden.

That some authentic information relative to his majesty's situation might be obtained, a privy-council was held at Whitehall on the third of December ; and the five physicians,<sup>9</sup> who had attended the king, were examined on oath. The result of their opinion was, that his majesty's indisposition rendered him quite incapable of attending to public business ; that, judging from their experience in similar cases, there was a fair probability of his recovery ; but that no time for that happy event could be fixed on with any degree of certainty. The following day, Mr. Pitt presented this report to the house of commons ; moving that it should be taken into consideration on the eighth ; and giving notice, that he should on that day propose the appointment of a committee to search for precedents applicable to the present unhappy situation of affairs. This motion was unanimously agreed to ; but doubts were expressed, whether the house ought to rest satisfied without a personal examination of the physicians, on whose testimony they were to found measures of such importance. Mr. Fox admitted, with Mr. Pitt, that all possible delicacy ought to be observed ; but if delicacy and duty should happen to clash, the latter ought not to be sacrificed to the former. Nothing farther was at this time said on the subject ; but a vacancy having soon

<sup>9</sup> Dr. Warren, Sir G. Baker, Sir L. Pepys, Dr. Reynolds, and Dr. Addington.



occurred in the representation of Colchester, the speaker expressed a doubt whether, during the inefficiency of one branch of the legislature, he was authorised to issue a new writ. Mr. Pitt declared his opinion, that although no act could take place which required a concurrence of all the branches; yet each house, in its separate capacity, was fully competent to exercise those powers which concerned its own peculiar jurisdiction; in which sentiment the house acquiesced, and immediately adjourned to the eighth. The royal family now removed to Kew, for the greater convenience of the king's medical attendants; and the disorder continuing without abatement, Dr. Willis, who was highly distinguished for his successful treatment of this malady, was called in to undertake the principal and constant charge of his majesty, who was visited by the other physicians only at stated times.

On the eighth of December, Mr. Pitt related these circumstances in the house, and moved the appointment of a committee to examine the medical gentlemen respecting the state of the king's health, and report such examination to the house: this motion being approved, a committee of twenty-one persons was appointed, of which Mr. Pitt was chosen the chairman: next day, when they met, those physicians who had been already examined by a privy-council, repeated the opinions which they had before delivered; and Dr. Willis expressed a confident expectation that his majesty would recover, though he could not pronounce how long his illness might continue: the view which he took of the king's malady was very different from that of the regular practitioners; and at his recommendation a new plan was adopted, from which he expected the happiest results. This report being laid on the table, another motion was made by Mr. Pitt on the tenth, for the appointment of a committee to inspect the journals for precedents; on which, Mr. Fox immediately rose, and asked, what precedents they were going to search for? Not precedents on their journals; not parliamentary precedents; but precedents in the history of England: there existed none on their journals, which could bear on the present case: besides, all that was requisite for their decision had been done by the report just brought up: by that they had ascertained the incapacity of the sovereign; and he advanced it as a proposition deducible from the principles of the constitution, and analogy of the law of hereditary succession, that as long as the sovereign was incapable of exercising his high functions, the heir apparent, provided he be of full age and capacity,



had an indisputable claim to the executive authority, in the name and behalf of his majesty: he thought it candid, entertaining such an opinion, to come forward fairly and avow it: that the prince himself had not urged his claim, he imputed to his well-known moderation, and his reverence for those principles, in the maintenance of which his family had flourished so happily on the throne of these realms.

Mr. Pitt, who had made himself master of all the bearings on this question, instantly perceived that his antagonist had put forward an opinion which he could not substantiate, and which, besides, was not likely to become popular either in parliament or in the country at large: taking advantage therefore of this imprudence, he defied the right honorable gentleman to support it by any analogy or precedent, or reconcile it to the spirit and genius of the constitution: the very intimation of this claim was an unanswerable reason for the appointment of the proposed committee; otherwise, the house would be excluded from all deliberation on the subject: he was confident, that to assert the existence of such an inherent right in the prince of Wales, or any one else, independent of the decision of parliament, was little less than treason to the constitution: it was virtually to revive those exploded ideas of the divine and indefeasible authority of princes, which had so justly sunk into contempt, and almost into oblivion. 'Kings and princes,' said Mr. Pitt, 'derived their power from the people; and to the people alone, by means of their representatives, did it belong to decide in cases for which the constitution had made no specific provision:' on these grounds he insisted that the prince had no more right to supply the existing deficiency, than any other subject; though he admitted that it was expedient for parliament to offer him the regency.

Thus was another grand political question at issue between these two rival statesmen, in which, as it has been remarked, Mr. Pitt, who had lately stood forth the champion of prerogative, now proclaimed himself a zealous assertor of popular rights; while Mr. Fox, who had been distinguished as a ready advocate of the people, appeared to be a deserter from the principles of liberty, and to lean towards prerogative. As applied to Mr. Pitt, the opinion is but partially correct: he certainly supported the rights of parliament; but not in opposition to the royal prerogative: on the contrary, all his efforts had for their object, to prevent the crown from losing any of its lawful appendages, and to secure to the sovereign the certain means of resuming the kingly power in its utmost



plenitude, whenever that incapacity should cease, which could alone justify the transfer of it to another: constitutionally speaking, he was the supporter of popular rights; for being well versed in constitutional history, he knew that the royal prerogative formed an essential part of the rights of the people; nay, that support given to the lawful rights of any component branch of the British constitution, is so far from injuring those of the other, that it has a direct tendency to preserve them.

In the house of peers, lord Loughborough supported the position which had been advanced by Mr. Fox, and endeavored with much legal ingenuity to prove, that the right ascribed to the prince was deducible from the act of settlement, as well as analogous to the principles of English law; that it was a privilege peculiar to the prince, and belonging to no other person: his lordship was seconded, in this view of the subject, by lord Stormont; though it was reprobated with much severity by that great constitutional lawyer, lord Camden: both sides, however, admitted that the right claimed for the heir apparent ought not to be exercised until parliament had declared the sovereign's incapacity. Mr. Fox, at the next meeting of the commons, being aware that his assertions had been ill received by a great part of the house, and also had caused a considerable sensation in the country, relinquished the idea of pressing the prince's claim on parliament; and was now only anxious to procure for his royal highness the full enjoyment of royalty, under the appointment of the two houses: the position which he was still ready to maintain was, that the two houses had the right to determine on the incapacity; but on such determination, the heir apparent had the right of holding the reins of government during that incapacity: as, however, Mr. Pitt agreed with him, that, under present circumstances, the prince was the person who ought to be invested with the office of regent, he thought the more prudent course would be to abstain from any discussion of such nice and subtile distinctions.

Mr. Pitt, in reply, declared that he still differed as much as ever from Mr. Fox regarding the question of right; and he not only challenged that gentleman to bring forward precedent or law in support of his doctrine, but actually showed from history, that such a claim of right had been made, and had been resisted by parliament.<sup>10</sup> As Mr. Fox, at this time,

<sup>10</sup> In the reign of Henry VI. when the duke of Gloucester



had some apprehension that the minister would propose a council of regency, greatly restricting the powers of the prince, he requested Mr. Pitt to state what sort of proposition he meant to bring forward on the sixteenth, not only as a convenience to himself and his friends, but that the house might be prepared to discuss it, with some degree of knowledge respecting its propriety and expediency. Mr. Pitt expressed himself ready to afford to the honorable gentleman every satisfaction in his power with respect to the plan he meant to pursue; but declared, that he should offer no point for discussion, until the house knew whether they were sitting as judges, merely to pronounce on the king's incapacity; or as an assembly possessing a power of deliberation, and capable of exercising their own discretion. They must first ascertain, whether that which should be vested in the prince, was a matter of adjudication on their part; or a trust on behalf and in the name of his majesty: if this question were settled, in what he thought a constitutional manner, he should afterwards propose specific measures: these he now proceeded to explain; observing, that whatever part of the royal power was necessary to be exercised in this unhappy interval, should be vested in a single person, unfettered by any permanent council, and free as to the choice of his political servants; also, that this person should be the prince of Wales: but with regard to such portion of the royal authority as ought to be given, any discussion at present would be premature; though he had no objection to declare generally, that whatever was necessary for carrying on the public business with vigor and despatch, and securing the interests of the country, should be given; while, on the other hand, he thought that all which was not necessary for those purposes, or which might be employed so as to embarrass the exercise of the king's authority, when he should be able to resume it, ought to be withheld, for the sake of the future interests, both of the people and of the crown. Whatever, in short, was given to him, or withheld, ought to be considered with regard to the moment, when his majesty should be capable of resuming his lawful prerogatives. As to himself, whatever judgment might be formed of these declarations, he felt conscious that he had given his opinion freely and honestly.

claimed the regency during the minority of the king; and at the revolution, when, the king ceasing to act, parliament did what amounted to a legislative act, and resolved to settle the crown on the prince and princess of Orange jointly.



Mr. Fox acknowledged that Mr. Pitt had stated, with extreme candor, as much as they had a right to expect from him: he now strongly deprecated the agitation of the question of right; but Mr. Sheridan, with great want of discretion, warned Mr. Pitt 'of the danger of provoking that claim to be asserted, which had not yet been preferred;' on which, the minister instantly rose, and declared that he had now an additional reason for maintaining the authority of the house, and settling the boundaries of right; since the deliberative powers of parliament were invaded, and an indecent menace was thrown out to overawe and influence their proceedings: he trusted, however, that the house would do its duty, in spite of any threat; 'however high the quarter from which it might come.'

What passed during the debates on this subject was misrepresented to the prince in so extraordinary a manner, as to induce him to think that Mr. Pitt intended to open his whole scheme of a regency on the sixteenth; under which impression, he wrote on the fifteenth to the lord chancellor, complaining of the minister's conduct, not only in this instance, but ever since the commencement of the king's illness;<sup>11</sup> especially of his intention to bring forward a plan, by which he, the prince, was to be appointed regent, without any previous communication with him. The part indeed which Mr. Pitt took at this important period exposed him to suspicions most grating to a generous mind; to the imputation of motives which he abhorred, and to reproaches which he would have scorned to deserve: but no taunts or invectives shook the firmness of his character; and his conduct, in this respect, was the more deserving of praise; since he could look to nothing as the consequence of it, but dismissal from office by the regent, at a time when his fortune had been impaired by unavoidable neglect of personal concerns through the magnitude and extent of his official duties. Determined, however, to do himself justice, as far as possible, in the eyes of the prince; he addressed a letter to him on the fifteenth, explanatory of his conduct, and of the reasons which induced him to disclose the general outline of the plan to be adopted; but whether this explanation was satisfactory to his royal highness or not, he had no means of knowing, as he was not honored with any reply.<sup>12</sup>

In the committee of the house on the sixteenth, Mr. Pitt moved three resolutions, which he prefaced by an able speech. The first, he observed, related solely to a matter of fact,

<sup>11</sup> Tomline, vol. ii. p. 387.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. p. 392.



stating, on the authority of the physicians, that an interruption had taken place in the exercise of the regal power; the second asserted that it was the right of parliament to provide means for supplying this defect in the personal exercise of the royal authority, during his majesty's indisposition; the third declared that it belonged to parliament to determine on the means whereby the royal assent might be given to bills respecting the exercise of the regal power, in the name and behalf of his majesty.

The first of these resolutions caused no remark; but the second was long and strenuously debated, both at the time when it was proposed, and also when the resolutions were reported to the house on the nineteenth: in the first instance, Mr. Pitt placed the question on the fairest ground; being determined to argue it on that real difference of opinion existing between himself and Mr. Fox. That honorable gentleman, he said, if he conceived his meaning, had asserted that the heir apparent, when the incapacity of the king to exercise the royal authority was declared by parliament, had as indisputable a right to the full exercise of all his father's functions, as if his majesty had died a natural death: he, however, denied that this right could be proved to exist, by precedent, by any positive law, or by the principles of the constitution; and he called on Mr. Fox to point out a single case of infancy, infirmity, or illness in a sovereign, where the full powers of that sovereign had been claimed and exercised by any individual whatever. In referring the committee to the precedents given in the report on the table, he showed that their result formed an undeniable proof that no such right existed;<sup>13</sup> nor was there any particular law, or any analogy from law, to support it. With regard to the principles of the British constitution, Mr. Pitt asserted, that in most countries so calamitous an event would have gone nigh to dissolve all the bonds of political union; but in this more happily tempered form of government, though the third estate of the legislature might be deficient, yet the organs of speech in the people remained intire, by means of their representatives, the two houses; and through them the sense of the people might be taken. The lords and commons represented all estates of the people; and their right it was to provide for such deficiency: nor did he state this merely as his own opinion: it was the opinion of those who had framed the revolution; who had not, as now,

<sup>13</sup> Tomline, vol. ii. p. 398.



to provide for the interruption of regal powers, while the throne was full ; but to supply the deficiency of the third branch of the legislature, which was wholly vacant : whether, however, the third branch was intirely gone, or suffered only a suspension, there was an equal necessity for recurring to the organs of the people's speech. As the power of filling the throne rested with the people at the revolution, and was exercised by parliament ; so, on the same principles of liberty, on the same rights of parliament, did the providing for the present deficiency rest with the people ; that is, with the lords and commons, their proper representatives.

Mr. Fox had on a former day described his majesty's situation as a civil death : against such a representation he protested : for if it were so, his royal highness would immediately ascend the throne, not as a regent, but with the full exercise of royalty ; since a civil, like a natural death, was permanent : he stated, on the authority of Blackstone, that there were but two causes of civil death ; banishment from the realm by process of law, or the profession of monastic vows ; and would any man pretend that either of these was analogous to the present visitation of Providence, which might, and probably would be, only a temporary blow ? Mr. Pitt also noticed some arguments which had been used in favor of the prince's claim to the regency, on the ground of his having certain rights which did not belong to any other person ; and he contended, that the existence of such rights, which he did not deny, no more proved his right to the regency, than the possession of an estate in Middlesex proved that the possessor had another in Yorkshire, and a third in Cornwall.

In conclusion, Mr. Pitt expressed his hopes, that the house would feel a conviction, that, if they had a right, they had also a duty ; a duty, which neither allegiance, nor their affection to their sovereign, would allow them to dispense with : it was absolutely necessary, not only unequivocally to declare their right, so that it might remain ascertained beyond the possibility of doubt hereafter, and become secured to posterity ; but to proceed immediately in taking preparatory steps for the exercise of that right ; and this was the object of his third resolution.<sup>14</sup>

Mr. Fox found it so difficult to answer this speech, that,

<sup>14</sup> Its purport was to empower the lord chancellor to affix the great seal to such bill of limitations as might be necessary to restrict the power of the future regent.



after objecting to the precedents quoted by Mr. Pitt, as drawn from dark and barbarous periods of our history, and vindicating himself from the notion of being influenced in his opinion by the favor of the prince, he digressed from the question of right to that of expediency ; and concluded with a personal attack on the minister, as a person who would sacrifice the principles of the constitution to his tenacious lust of power. Mr. Pitt not only rebutted this charge, but enforced his former arguments with such ability and address, that lord North's motion, for the chairman to leave the chair, was negatived by a majority of 268 against 204 ; and the resolutions passed without a division.

On being reported to the house three days afterwards, the third was objected to as unnecessary and unconstitutional ; and it was warmly contended, that as all were agreed that the regency should be conferred on the prince of Wales, it would be more simple, and more conformable to what was done at the time of the revolution, to present an address to his royal highness, requesting him to take on himself the administration of the government during his majesty's incapacity. An amendment to this effect was moved by Mr. Dempster ; and the debate being deferred to the next day, it was then negatived by 251 votes against 178. The three resolutions were, at a conference, delivered to the house of lords, who agreed to them, after two long debates, and one division, in which the numbers were ninety-nine and sixty-six.

The two remaining branches of the legislature having thus established the principles on which they were to act, Mr. Pitt submitted to the prince of Wales the heads of a plan agreed on by the cabinet, in a letter, dated December 30. This went to invest his royal highness with the power of exercising regal authority ; which, however, was not to extend to the granting of any real or personal property belonging to the king, or any pension or office, for any other term than during his majesty's pleasure, except such as must by law be granted for life or during good behavior ; nor to the granting of any peerage, except to such of his majesty's issue as shall have arrived at the age of twenty-one years : at the same time it was intimated, that the care of the king's person, and the disposition of the royal household, would be committed to the queen. The answer sent by his royal highness to this communication seems to have been dictated by that spirit of resentment, which the party, whose speculations it thwarted, would naturally feel. After commenting on its terms, which he characterised as a



project for producing weakness, disorder, and insecurity into every branch of administration; as a scheme for dividing the members of the royal family from each other, and separating the court from the state; as a design for disconnecting the authority to command service from the power of animating it by reward; and for allotting to the prince all the invidious duties of government, without the means of softening them to the public by any one act of grace or favor;—he consented to undertake the painful trust imposed on him, from a conviction of the evils which would arise to the king's interests, to the peace of the royal family, and to the welfare of the nation, from the government remaining longer in its maimed and debilitated state. Mr. Pitt, in a second letter to the prince, expressed deep regret, on the part of himself and his colleagues, that a plan, which had been formed after the maturest deliberation, and with the best intentions, should have appeared liable to the observations made on it by his royal highness; but as they considered the principles of that plan to result from their indispensable duty to their sovereign and to the public, they felt themselves bound to adhere to them in the propositions that might be offered to parliament.

At this time the business of the house of commons experienced a short interruption by the death of the speaker, on the second of January: on the fifth, Mr. William Grenville was proposed as his successor by the friends of administration, and Sir Gilbert Elliot by the opposite party. The former was chosen by a large majority; and immediately afterwards, Mr. Pitt gave notice, that he should next day lay before the house the restrictions which he considered necessary to be annexed to the regency.

Other incidents now occurred, chiefly owing to the imprudence of Mr. Fox and his party, which threw all the advantage into the hands of their antagonist. Mr. Pitt, after combating and overthrowing the claim of right set up for the heir apparent, had fully admitted that he was the person most proper to exercise regal authority; and having established the restrictions which he thought were required, and which were to last only for a definite time, he prepared to give up office, and invest his royal highness with the regency. He had surmised that the two houses would act at once on the report of the privy-council of December 3; but Mr. Fox, whose obvious policy was to proceed without delay, from that moment seemed to study nothing else but delay: no man was more eager for power; and he must have known the advantages which a ministry in possession of place would possess over a mi-



nistry broken up and excluded from office, even in the event of the king's recovery: but all was in vain; he went on, tampering with fortune, debating, and opposing, until the king recovered; and the power of his great rival became more firmly established than ever. Notwithstanding the minister's strong reluctance to bring the royal physicians to that open and rude test, in which it was necessary to refer to many personal and painful circumstances of his majesty's illness, Mr. Fox determined that they should be examined at the bar of the house; and Mr. Loveden, member for Abingdon, was urged by the opposition to make a motion to that effect: in this, Mr. Pitt, after having at first opposed it, ultimately acquiesced: the examination, which ought to have been as brief as possible, was prolonged by the frivolous questions of opposition members, and by frequent altercations; so that the report was not brought up before Tuesday the thirteenth of January, and was appointed to be taken into consideration the following Friday; on which day the minister introduced his plan of a restricted regency. The subject, he observed, divided itself into three heads:—the nature of the king's illness; the principles on which parliament was authorised to act on this occasion; and the application of those principles to the measures which he should propose, for remedying the present deficiency. From the recent examination of the physicians, the house was confirmed in its conclusions drawn from their former statement, that his majesty's illness rendered him incapable of personally exercising his high functions, although his recovery was probable: in these two points all the physicians agreed; and one of them in particular, Dr. Willis, whose experience was by far the greatest, and who alone was in constant attendance on his majesty, declared his opinion, that since the former examination, the symptoms were more favorable, and the disorder had begun to abate. He felt himself justified therefore, in stating, that what the houses had to provide for, was no more than a temporary deficiency; but if his majesty's illness should be unfortunately protracted, parliament might then proceed to do, what was now clearly unnecessary; that is, to form a more permanent plan.

The principles on which they were to proceed, arose from the nature and probable duration of the deficiency: they were to provide for the present necessity only, and to do no more than what it required; they were also to guard against any embarrassment in his majesty's resumption of authority, and therefore to grant such powers only as were requisite for



the government of the country with energy and effect: on these principles he had framed his plan; of which the outlines were exhibited in his letter to the prince of Wales; who was to exercise the whole regal authority, subject to restrictions, which were not intended to interfere with the despatch of public business. He then detailed those restrictions, as they regarded the peerage, the distribution of places and pensions, the king's personal property, and the care of the royal person.

With regard to the first limitation, Mr. Pitt adduced three grounds on which the prerogative rested: first, it was designed to enable the sovereign to counteract the designs of any factious cabal in the house of lords; secondly, to reward eminent merit; and thirdly, to provide for the fluctuations of wealth and property in the country, by raising men of great landed interest to the peerage; by which means that branch of the legislature might always be kept on its true and proper basis. For none of these purposes was the exercise of this prerogative necessary in the present instance: but on the other hand, if it were committed to the regent, such a number of peers might be created, as would greatly embarrass his majesty's government, on his restoration to health. On the same principle was founded the second restriction: the powers restrained were not necessary to the executive government, which was to be held temporarily by the regent; while their exercise might be injurious to his majesty on his recovery. The third restriction he scarcely thought necessary, except as showing their desire to act on parliamentary principles, and to make their provisions as comprehensive as possible. With regard to the fourth resolution, by which it was intended not only to place the king's person under the care of the queen, but to subject the whole of his majesty's household to her authority, Mr. Pitt observed, that, unless she held this power of dismissing and appointing any officer at her pleasure, she could not discharge the important trust confided to her care: a council indeed would be named to assist her majesty with its advice, but without any power of control: trustees would be appointed to manage the real and personal estates of the king, but without any authority to dispose of them, except in the granting of leases.

The propositions were strenuously supported in arguments, brought forward by the minister and others: the law officers maintained, that the king's political character, being inseparable from his personal character, would remain perfect and intire till his natural demise; and to this principle frequent reference was made in the course of the debates. Mr. Powys,



after condemning the whole of Mr. Pitt's system, as a monstrous fabric, which tended to mutilate the constitutional authority of the crown, and asserting that the heir apparent ought to be invested with the full powers and prerogatives of royalty, moved an amendment to the first resolution, by which his royal highness would be appointed regent, 'subject to such limitations and exceptions as might be provided.' A long debate ensued, in which the new speaker vindicated the proposed plan by very extensive details, elaborate research, and accurate induction; detaining and engaging the attention of the house for the space of three hours, while he delivered his sentiments. From the constitutional history of the kingdom, he showed, that the principle on which our ancestors conferred and limited the powers of a regent, were the same as those applied to the present occasion; in which it was proposed, on the one hand, to establish a government capable of executing the public business, and on the other, to provide ample security for the sovereign to resume his authority without embarrassment. Keeping this principle in view, he applied it to the various restrictions; contending, that the extent of the delegation was sufficient for the due execution of the trust, and that the restrictions were necessary to the security of resumption.

Mr. Fox with his usual energy impugned the doctrine of the law officers; declaring himself incapable of understanding how a person, whose political faculties were suspended by a visitation of Providence, could still exist in the full enjoyment of his political character. While the supporters of this doctrine took up the superstitions of antiquity, they rejected its morality: they enveloped the sacred person of the king with a political veil, calculated to inspire awe and obedience; but labored to enfeeble the arms of government, to cripple it in its essential parts, to expose it to hostile attack, and to divest it of the dignity appertaining to itself, as well as the use for which it was designed in behalf of the people. He reprobated, with peculiar severity, the restrictions which regarded the peerage: Mr. Pitt had conferred that rank on no less than forty-two persons during his five years of office, without having the pretext of saying that any cabal existed to thwart his measures in the house of lords: if then such were the means to which he had been obliged to resort, surrounded as he was with all the power and influence of the crown; what must be the condition of those, who would have to contend, in a crippled state, against an opposition armed with so large a portion of the



patronage of government? He expressed also his abhorrence of a project, which placed in a state of competition, persons connected by blood, duty, and affection; thereby exciting that mutual jealousy, which is in some degree inseparable from the human mind.

Lord North also, though declining in years and afflicted with blindness, took an active part in opposing Mr. Pitt's plan. Expatiating on the arguments used in support of it, 'the minister,' he said, 'strains at a gnat, but swallows a camel: he is not afraid to delegate the great functions of executive power, but he startles at the small: take the patronage, take the disposal of the civil, political, and military appointments, but keep away from the court; command the army and navy, but abstain from the household troops; break down the barrier of the constitution, and cripple the sovereign power; but touch not the pages, gentlemen ushers, or lords of the bedchamber. This,' said his lordship, 'reminds me of my old nurse's stories about the achievements of witches: they can ride through the air, agitate the elements, raise the wind and rain, lightning and thunder: all this they can do without flinching; but if they come to a straw, there they boggle, stumble, and can proceed no farther.' Notwithstanding all the force of argument and ridicule which could be brought against them, the resolutions passed the house, and were, on the twentieth, communicated to the lords. On the twenty-sixth, the house was informed of their lordships' concurrence; and it was then voted that a communication should be made to the prince and queen of the measures taken, and their consent be requested: accordingly, on the thirtieth of January, the resolutions were presented to those illustrious personages by a committee of peers and commoners. The answer of his royal highness, reported to the house by Mr. Pitt, who was one of the members of the committee, was similar in substance to the concluding part of his letter to the minister: her majesty's reply, communicated by lord Courtown, declared, that 'duty and gratitude to the king, and a sense of her obligations to this country, would engage her most earnest attention to the momentous trust reposed in her by parliament; while the aid of a council was most acceptable to her, in the discharge of an office, with which was connected, not only her own happiness, but also a higher object—the happiness of a great, loyal, and affectionate people.'

Ministers now considering it their duty to proceed with all practicable despatch, lord Camden moved in the house of



lords, on the thirty-first, that letters patent should be issued, under the great seal, empowering certain commissioners to open and hold the king's parliament at Westminster. The arguments already adduced by both parties were now repeated; and the names being read, those of the prince of Wales, and the dukes of York, Gloucester, and Cumberland were found at the head of the commission: the duke of York, therefore, whose views on this subject intirely coincided with those of the opposition, rose and said, that from want of knowlege, he had been unable to take any steps to prevent his nomination: not wishing, however, to stand on record, and to be handed down to posterity, as approving such an unconstitutional and illegal measure, he could not sanction the proceedings with his name; the omission of which, as well as that of his brother the prince of Wales, he now requested: the duke of Cumberland also made the same demand, on behalf of himself and the duke of Gloucester; and the names of these princes were accordingly left out of the commission. The resolution being carried, was on the second of February adopted by the commons, in consequence of which the lord chancellor affixed the great seal to a commission for opening parliament; and on the third, the commissioners laid before the two houses the causes of the present meeting, and the objects which required their deliberation.

While these proceedings were taking place in the British parliament, the king's disorder was gradually subsiding, and the public had the satisfaction of receiving more favorable accounts of their sovereign in the daily bulletins, signed by the physicians. A great variety of opinions prevailed at this time respecting his majesty's ultimate recovery: some affected to think that the malady would continue through life, or be succeeded by a state of incurable fatuity; many, even among his medical attendants, believed his recovery to be still distant; and others feared, that, even should the malady be removed, a considerable time must elapse before he could undertake the anxious cares of his high station, without the hazard of a relapse: few were sanguine enough to think that no regency would be requisite. Mr. Pitt himself was inclined to entertain such an expectation,<sup>15</sup> in which he was encouraged by the judgment of Dr. Willis; who both now, and at all times, during his majesty's illness, was strongly opposed in opinion to Dr. Warren. After minute inquiry, however, and impartial

<sup>15</sup> Tomline, vol. ii. p. 474.



reflection, the minister was convinced that his majesty's progress in amendment was not rapid enough to justify him in stopping measures for the appointment of a regent; consequently he presented his bill to the house of commons on the fifth of February, authorising the prince of Wales to exercise all the royal authority, and to perform every act of government, subject to the three restrictions already mentioned; while the care of his majesty's person was assigned to the queen, assisted by a council of advice: it also contained provisions for the resumption of the regal power, in case of the king's recovery.

The bill was read a second time on the sixth, after a few observations from Mr. Burke; but the evil genius of the opposition was still in the ascendant: the measure was four days in passing through the committee; almost every article being warmly contested on the same grounds as when the resolutions were discussed. On the third reading, a clause was introduced, limiting the restriction relative to the creation of peers to the term of three years; and the bill passed the commons on the thirteenth. Still the improvement in his majesty's health advanced without interruption, and of course Mr. Pitt became more sanguine in his hopes: however, he still thought it right to let the proceedings go on; and the bill being carried to the upper house on the thirteenth, produced a general notion that the regency would unquestionably take place: indeed, it was openly declared that arrangements were made for a new administration, in which the duke of Portland was to be first lord of the treasury, Mr. Fox secretary of state, and earl Spencer lord-lieutenant of Ireland; but two months had been thrown away, during which this new administration might have been appointed; and now a sudden termination of all their hopes and designs was at hand in the king's recovery.

On the nineteenth, after the bill had been read a second time in the upper house, the lord chancellor from the woolsack intimated that his majesty's progressive improvement had been so regular, and the recent intelligence from Kew was so favorable, that it would be indecorous to proceed in their present measures; and he had no doubt, but that the house, participating in the general happiness of his majesty's subjects, would consider it absolutely necessary to wait a few days before they went farther with the bill; he accordingly submitted to their lordships the propriety of the committee adjourning to the twenty-fourth. This intelligence was received



with general satisfaction, and the proposed adjournment took place.

The Irish parliament seized this opportunity of exercising that independent power which it had so recently established, by adopting a plan totally opposite to what had been sanctioned in the British senate. A motion, supported by Mr. Grattan, was carried without a division, for presenting an address to the prince of Wales; requesting him to take on himself the government of Ireland during his majesty's incapacity: a similar measure was carried in the house of peers; and on the nineteenth of February, a deputation of lords and commoners waited on the lord-lieutenant, in order to forward the address through his hands: his excellency, however, declared, that consistently with his impression of duty, and the oath which he had taken, he could not present an address to his royal highness, inviting him to undertake the government of that realm, before he should be enabled to do so by law; it was therefore resolved in both houses to appoint a committee of two peers and three commoners, to carry their intentions into effect. These delegates accordingly set out for England; but the auspicious recovery of the sovereign rendered the object of their undertaking nugatory.

On the twenty-third of February, the day before that to which the house of peers had adjourned, Mr. Pitt, who was dining with lord Chesterfield, received a letter from the king, written in his own hand, and announcing his recovery. The epistle was short; but it expressed his majesty's great satisfaction at the idea of a renewed intercourse with his minister after so long a suspension, and of restoring the functions of government; for which purpose Mr. Pitt was requested to confer with the lord chancellor, and to visit his majesty next day at Kew.

On the twenty-fourth, the chancellor informed the lords that he had been admitted to several interviews with the king, and had a conference for an hour with him that very day; also that his majesty's mind was clear, and his conceptions distinct; so that he appeared capable of conversing on any topic: under these circumstances, several adjournments of the peers took place, as well as of the commons, to whom similar information was imparted by the minister. At length, conformably to notice, a commission under the great seal was read to the two houses, on the tenth of March, authorising the commissioners previously appointed by letters patent for opening



the parliament, to declare certain additional causes for holding the same; after which the lord chancellor observed, that his majesty being, by the blessing of Providence, recovered from his afflicting malady, had commanded him to convey to parliament his warmest acknowledgements for the proofs they had given of affection to his person, of zeal for the honor of his crown, and concern for the security and good government of his dominions: that he doubted not but that the late serious interruption of public business would afford them an additional incitement to apply themselves, as soon as possible, to the different objects of national concern which required their attention. Notice also was taken of the Prussian alliance; and the house of commons was informed that the estimates of the current year would be forthwith laid before them. An address of congratulation and thanks to his majesty was passed in the house of commons without a dissentient voice; and the same unanimity prevailed regarding a motion for a message to the queen, congratulating her on an event in which she was so peculiarly interested. Actuated by that religious principle which formed so distinguishing a part of his character, the king determined to return public thanks to Almighty God, in the cathedral of his metropolis, for the mercy which had been vouchsafed to him: accordingly, on the twenty-third of April, which was appointed to be held as a day of public thanksgiving throughout the kingdom, his majesty, attended by the queen and royal family, the two houses of parliament, and all the great officers of state, judges, and foreign ambassadors, repaired in procession to St. Pauls. His majesty entered at the west end of the church, where a military band was stationed, which played appropriate music, until he reached the area under the great dome: it then ceased; and the organ, accompanied by the voices of above 5000 children of the charity schools, placed on circular seats gradually rising between the pillars, burst forth in that simple but sublime melody, the hundredth psalm. The king was evidently affected; and, turning to the bishop of Lincoln, near whom, as dean of the cathedral, he was walking, said with great emotion, 'I now feel that I have been ill.'<sup>16</sup> He then stopped; but soon recovering himself, proceeded to the choir, where the humility with which he at first knelt down, and the fervor with which he appeared to pour forth the thanksgivings of a grateful heart to the supreme disposer of life and death, made a lasting

<sup>16</sup> Tomline, *Life of Pitt*, vol. ii. p. 488.



impression on the minds of those who beheld him. In the evening, a general illumination and other demonstrations of joy took place, not only in the metropolis, but in every town, and almost every village of the realm. Grand galas, concerts, drawing-rooms, and visits to the theatres followed his majesty's recovery; nor, amidst the general exultation, did the steady, consistent, and constitutional conduct of Mr. Pitt remain unacknowledged: it would indeed be difficult to fix on a period in our annals, when any king was more universally revered by his people, or any minister stood higher in the confidence both of the sovereign and the public, than at the time in question. In a conversation, which his majesty held soon after his convalescence with Mr. justice Hardinge, he greatly commended the conduct of the house of commons in regard to the regency question; adding, that his illness had eventually been a great source of happiness to him, as proving 'how nobly the people would support him when he was in trouble.'

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## CHAP. XXXII.

## GEORGE III. (CONTINUED.)—1789.

Plan of fortifying the West Indian islands adopted—Shop tax repealed—Mr. Beaufoy's motion respecting the corporation and test acts—Lord Stanhope's to repeal the penal laws—Mr. Wilberforce's motion for the abolition of the slave trade—Debates on it in the house of commons—Opinions in the country at large—Sir William Dolben's bill renewed—Lord Sidney resigns his office of secretary of state—Mr. Grenville succeeds him—Mr. Addington elected speaker—Mr. Pitt's financial scheme for the year—Finances of the East India company, &c.—Affairs in the impeachment of Warren Hastings—Prorogation of parliament—The royal family visit the southern coast—Return to Windsor, levees, &c.—State of affairs in the north of Europe, in the Netherlands, and in France.

ONE of the earliest subjects that engaged the attention of parliament, was a plan formed by the master-general of the ordnance for the fortification of the West Indian islands, which, after considerable discussion, was adopted: Mr. Fox also succeeded in his motion for the repeal of the shop tax, which was found to fall very heavily on the metropolis and other great commercial towns, where the rent of houses is necessarily high. On the eighth of May, Mr. Beaufoy again moved the repeal of the corporation and test acts: he was strongly supported by Mr. Fox, who laid it down as an axiom in policy, that no human government has any jurisdiction over opinions as such, more especially over religious opinions: when these produced acts injurious to society, the law knows how and where to apply the remedy. If the reverse of this doctrine were adopted; if the actions of men were to be prejudged from their opinions;—the seeds of everlasting jealousy and distrust would be sown; the most unlimited scope would be given to the malignant passions; each man would be incited to divine the sentiments of his neighbor, in order to deduce from them mischievous consequences, and thence prove that he ought to incur disabilities, be fettered with restrictions, and harassed with penalties: from such intolerant principles had flowed every species of party zeal, every system of political



persecution, every extravagance of religious hate. There were many men, not of the establishment, to whose services their country had a claim: surely, such citizens might be permitted, without absurdity, to say;—though we dissent from the church, we are friends to the constitution; and on religious subjects are entitled to think and act as we please. Ought the country to be deprived of the talents of such men; and his majesty be prevented from dispensing the favors of the crown, except to one class of his subjects? These acts, it was contended, had subsisted for more than a century. True; but with repeated suspensions: the indemnity bills were, literally speaking, annual acts. Where then would be the impropriety of suspending them by an act of perpetual operation? Let not Great Britain be the last to avail herself of the general progress of human improvement. Indulgence to other sects, and a desire to promote charity and good-will, were the best proofs any religion could give of its divine origin.

Mr. Pitt opposed the motion on the same ground as in 1787. In reply to Mr. Fox's assertions, he observed, that government had a right to prevent any civil inconvenience which peculiar opinions were likely to produce, without waiting till the inconvenience was actually experienced: he considered the established church as a part of the constitution, and the acts in question as justifiable on the principle of self-defence: he spoke of the great tranquillity which reigned at present in respect to religious differences; and declared, that if any thing could interrupt the harmony which subsisted between sects that once contended with such bitter animosity, it would be by awakening competition, and rekindling those sparks of ancient animosity, which mutual forbearance had almost extinguished. The motion was negatived by a majority of only twenty, the numbers being 122 and 102. A few days after this motion, lord Stanhope proposed a bill for relieving all nonconformists from the operation of the penal laws, and allowing them the free exercise of their faith in preaching and in writing, papists only being excepted on account of their dangerous and persecuting principles. It was strongly opposed by the bench of bishops, as tending to unloose the very bonds of society, by substituting every species of fanaticism in the place of religious order and subordination; and by opening a door to licentiousness and contempt of christianity, under pretence of establishing religious liberty. Dr. Horsley admitted the absurdity of some of our penal laws; but objected to the bill, as destructive to the church of England, and thereby



tending to destroy the constitution, of which that church was a firm and useful ally. Lord Stanhope made a very indecorous reply to the right reverend bench;<sup>17</sup> and the bill was rejected at the second reading.

By a vote of last session the consideration of the slave trade had been postponed to the present; and now it was felt that the season was too far advanced for properly discussing so extensive and complicated a subject: the privy-council, however, had persevered in the investigation of facts, and presented a report to the house; on which Mr. Wilberforce founded twelve resolutions, the last of which was an inference from several that preceded it, showing that 'no inconvenience would arise from discontinuing the farther importation of African slaves:' these resolutions he introduced on the twelfth of May; and in his introductory speech, he considered the subject, first on the question of humanity, and next on that of policy. From the evidence before the council, it appeared, that the number of slaves carried away annually from Africa, on an average of four years, amounted to 38,000, chiefly brought from the interior of the country: they consisted of four classes; prisoners taken in war; persons seized for debt, or for crimes alleged or imputed; domestic slaves sold for the emolument of their masters; and persons made slaves by violence or fraud. The trade thus carried on had a necessary tendency to cause frequent and cruel wars; to produce unjust convictions and aggravated punishments for pretended crimes; to encourage fraud and oppression; and to obstruct the natural course of civilisation and improvement. In regard to policy, since Africa furnished many valuable articles peculiar to that quarter of the globe, and highly important to our manufactures, there might be substituted for the slave trade an extensive commerce, which would at once equal the profits of this traffic, and would probably increase with the civilisation that would follow the abolition of so barbarous and depopulating a system. After dilating on the infectious distempers arising from the confinement of the negroes, their grievous sufferings on the passage from Africa to the colonies, the diseases which prevailed among them on their arrival, with the dissoluteness, and other causes, which prevented the natural increase of

<sup>17</sup> 'If they would not suffer him,' he said, 'to load away their rubbish by cartfulls, he would endeavor to carry it off in wheelbarrows; and if that mode were resisted, he would take it away with a spade.'



population among these wretched beings, he inferred, that if we obviated the causes which had hitherto obstructed the natural increase of the negroes in our plantations, and established good regulations among them, no considerable or permanent inconvenience would arise from discontinuing the importation from Africa: 'but at all events,' said Mr. Wilberforce, 'a trade, founded in iniquity, and carried on with so many circumstances of horror, must be abolished, let its policy be what it will.' His mind had, indeed, been harassed with the objections of the West India planters, who asserted that such a measure would be followed by the absolute ruin of their property: he could not, however, help distrusting their arguments: he could not believe, that the Almighty, who forbade the practice of rapine and bloodshed, had made those crimes necessary to the well-being of any part of his universe: he felt a confidence in that persuasion; he took the resolution to act on it; and light soon broke in on him: his suspicion was every day confirmed by increasing information; and he was enabled to prove by incontrovertible evidence, that the number of negroes in our colonies might be kept up without the introduction of recruits from Africa. 'Let us then,' said this truly christian orator, 'make such amends as we can, for the mischief we have done to that unhappy continent: let us put an end at once to this inhuman traffic, and stop this effusion of human blood. The true way to virtue is to avoid temptation: let us therefore withdraw from these wretched Africans those temptations to fraud, violence, cruelty, and injustice which the slave trade furnishes: wherever the sun shines, let us go round the world with him, diffusing our beneficence; but let us not traffic only that we may set kings against their subjects, and subjects against their kings; sowing discord in every village, fear and terror in every family, urging millions of our fellow creatures to hunt each other for slaves, creating fairs and markets for human flesh through one whole continent of the world; and, under the name of policy, concealing from ourselves all the base iniquity of such a traffic.'

Having moved his resolutions, Mr. Wilberforce said that he did not wish the house to decide on them at that time, but should consider the debate as adjourned to some day in the following week.

Mr. Burke declared, that not only England, but all Europe was deeply indebted to the honorable mover, for exposing the iniquity of a trade, 'which began with savage war, was prosecuted with unheard of cruelty, continued during the



middle passage with the most loathsome imprisonment, and ended in perpetual exile and unremitting slavery.' Mr. Pitt also expressed warm approbation of the manner in which the subject had been brought before the house: as to the mode of abolition, they were not called on at present to discuss it; but he trusted it would not tempt foreign powers to supply our islands with slaves by a clandestine trade: nevertheless, we must not be deterred by such fears from relinquishing so detestable a traffic, when convinced that it ought to be abolished: our language must be, that Great Britain had resources which enabled her to protect her islands, and prevent that commerce from being secretly carried on with them, which she had thought fit, for her own honor, to abandon: it was her duty to take the lead; and foreign nations might be induced to concur with her, either by negociation, or by that effect, which the propositions, by being put on the journals, would in all probability produce.

Mr. Fox expressed similar sentiments: he thought that a trade in human flesh was so revolting, as to be in the last degree infamous to the government which permitted it; he also thought that France, our great political rival, would catch a spark from the fire which illuminated this country, and run a race with us in promoting the ends of humanity.<sup>18</sup>

But though the two great political leaders were favorable to this humane design, it was evident that it would be met by a strong and determined opposition in other quarters: numerous petitions had been already presented against it, and others were in a state of preparation: that powerful body of men, the West Indian merchants, and almost all persons connected with the colonial trade, felt persuaded that their interests would suffer by the success of Mr. Wilberforce's proposal: an immense property situated in, and connected with the islands, belonged to members of both houses of parliament, and other persons of influence; much of this property was encumbered by mortgages and annuities to a large extent, the owners of which were taught to believe that their securities would be deteriorated by the abolition of the slave trade: many also, thinking that the evils of this traffic were exaggerated, or might be mitigated with proper regulations, urged in its favor the plea of long-established practice, the sanction of the legislature, the loss of national commerce that would ensue, and

<sup>18</sup> Subsequent events have shown how utterly mistaken he was in the sentiments of the French nation on this subject.



the danger of introducing a compulsory system in the management of private property : it was, besides, strongly contended, that, in a question of such importance, it would be improper to rely wholly on the report of the privy-council ; and that the house ought to have an opportunity of forming its own judgment from evidence at its bar : this was thought to be a reasonable demand ; and it was agreed that counsel should be heard, and witnesses examined : accordingly, a committee of the whole house sat for this purpose, every vacant day, from the twenty-seventh of May to the twenty-third of June ; when so little progress was made, that both parties consented to defer the business till next session : this induced Sir William Dolben to bring in a bill for continuing the act of last year, which regulated the transportation of the slaves from Africa to the colonies ; and which was the more necessary, as the mortality in the middle passage was shown before the privy-council to be far greater than he had then stated it. This act passed, to remain in force till August, 1790.

In the beginning of June, lord Sidney having resigned the office of secretary of state for the home department, Mr. Grenville was appointed to succeed him, and Mr. Henry Addington was elevated to the speaker's chair : on the tenth, Mr. Pitt opened to the house his financial scheme for the year : the permanent income declared necessary by the committee of 1786 to defray the annual demands, was £15,500,000 : for the last two years it had exceeded that sum by £78,000 ; but the expenses of the preceding year, the armament, the discharge of the prince of Wales's debts, the sums granted to American loyalists, and other contingences, had greatly exceeded the usual peace establishment : from these causes, the total amount of supplies required for the current year amounted to £5,730,000, besides the annual renewal of exchequer bills : to provide for this, in addition to the usual resources, a loan of £1,000,000 would be necessary ; which he proposed to borrow on a tontine, or a scheme of life annuities with the benefit of survivorship, the payment of which would cease in due time : as the necessity for this loan arose, not from any decrease of revenue, but only from an increase of expenditure, the minister justly contended, that no argument could be deduced from it unfavorable to our national resources : to pay these tontine annuities, which he calculated at about £44,750 ; and also to supply a defalcation in the revenue, occasioned by the repeal of the shop tax, which in the last year had produced £56,000 ; he proposed, not to



bring forward any new tax, but merely to make a small addition to existing taxes on newspapers, advertisements, cards, dice, probates of wills, horses, and carriages; none of which, he conceived, would press at all on the poor, nor heavily on any class of persons.

To increase the revenue by the farther prevention of frauds, Mr. Pitt introduced and carried a bill for transferring the duties on tobacco from the customs to the excise; for it appeared, on inquiry, that one half of this article consumed in the kingdom was obtained by smuggling; so that the revenue was defrauded to the amount of nearly £300,000: a loud clamor was raised in this case, as when the alterations took place in the wine duties; and this extension of the excise laws was reprobated as an unconstitutional measure, and an infraction of British liberty: but such trite declamation did not influence the minister: the principal objections of the manufacturers and others engaged in the tobacco trade were obviated by modifications introduced into the bill; while the general outcry was answered, by observing, that the proposed measure would place only a small number of additional persons under the excise, most of them being already subject to it on account of other articles in which they dealt.

On the first of July, Mr. Dundas presented to the house a statement of the East India company's finances; whence it appeared, that their annual revenues, after defraying the expenses of the different settlements, amounted to £1,848,000; that the interest of their debt was £480,700, and the principal £7,604,000; so that the excess of revenue beyond the interest, to be applied for liquidation of the debt, was £1,367,300: a petition, grounded on this statement, was presented from the company, praying that they might be permitted to add £1,000,000 to their capital stock, to be subscribed by the present proprietors: this application was supported by Mr. Dundas, who affirmed, that on a supposition of the extinction of the charter in 1794, their effects in Europe would overbalance their debts by the sum of £350,000; while those in India would go with the territory, and be readily taken by any power into whose hands it might be transferred: a bill was therefore introduced for the purpose required, which passed both houses after a slight opposition.

The trial of Warren Hastings proceeded at a very slow rate: the court was not reopened before the twentieth of April, when Mr. Burke brought forward a charge relative to the corrupt receipt



of money; in the course of which, having occasion to make mention of Nuncomar, he observed that Mr. Hastings had murdered that personage by the hands of Sir Elijah Impey. In consequence of this, major Scott presented a petition to the house of commons, on behalf of the governor-general; complaining that the managers, and especially Mr. Burke, had last year introduced allegations against him wholly unconnected with the charges, and praying that the present accusation might be formed into a specific article, in order to give him an opportunity of refuting it; or that such other redress might be afforded to him, as should seem good to the house. This petition gave rise to some violent debates, which called for the interposition of the speaker; major Scott accusing Mr. Burke of deliberate, systematic, and intentional misrepresentation; while he, in return, asserted that the major was a libeller on the house of commons, from which he ought long since to have been expelled; and that no credit was due to his assertions.

It was urged, that to receive this petition, would not only be inconsistent with the confidence reposed by the house in the managers, and weaken its authority in the exercise of its inquisitorial rights; but would also have a bad tendency, by allowing an accused person to arraign the conduct of his prosecutors, and in his turn to become their accuser: the petition was also represented as a design to disgust the managers, and cause them to abandon the prosecution. Others, however, and especially the minister, contended that it was totally unjustifiable in the managers to bring forward charges against Mr. Hastings not contained in the articles of impeachment; especially, if, as in the present instance, the unauthorised accusations implied more criminality than those articles themselves; that the house did not mean to charge Mr. Hastings with murder, when they voted that he should be impeached for bribery and peculation; that the charges were definite, and the managers bound to confine their efforts to substantiate the facts to which they referred, without digressing into extraneous and irrelevant subjects, in order to prejudice the court and injure the character of the accused. Nevertheless, Mr. Pitt thought that the house ought not to take cognisance of what was said last session, but confine itself to the present allegation respecting Sir Elijah Impey, against whom the house itself had declared there was no ground for a criminal accusation: the words spoken, therefore, appeared to him highly unbecoming, and worthy of censure; though he did not wish to go farther than was necessary in doing that justice to the accused, to



which, although deservedly under prosecution, he thought him entitled. To finish this dispute, which lasted four days, the marquis of Graham moved a vote of censure against Mr. Burke, as having spoken words which ought not to have been uttered: it was supported by Mr. Pitt; and though strenuously opposed by Mr. Fox and the other managers, was carried by a majority of 155 against 66. The session terminated on the eleventh of August, by a speech from the lord chancellor, in the name of his majesty, who, though he continued free from all mental aberration, was too much indisposed to attend as usual to public business: accordingly, he spent the summer with his royal consort and family in a tour along the southern coast of Great Britain, visiting Southampton, Weymouth, and Plymouth; at which latter place they were splendidly entertained by the noble owner of Mount Edgecumbe. On the sixteenth of September, the royal party returned to Windsor, when the health of his majesty appeared to be completely restored, and he entered into his customary pursuits and amusements with increased satisfaction: on the twenty-third, the king held a levee for the first time since his indisposition; and on the eighteenth of November, their majesties went to Covent Garden theatre with the three eldest princesses: also, on the sixteenth of December, they visited Drury Lane; being in both instances received by their subjects with the most enthusiastic cheers.

At this period, while England enjoyed complete repose, flourishing in arts, and prosperous in commerce, war and anarchy were disturbing a large portion of the continent, and preparing to strip the diadem from the brow of royalty. In the preceding year, the king of Sweden, offended at the intrigues of Russian emissaries, jealous of the aggrandisement of the ambitious czarina, and anxious to recover some portion of the territory which had been wrested from his predecessors, had commenced a war with Russia. He endeavored, in vain, to draw the Danes into an alliance; for they were engaged by treaty to assist the Russians, if the latter should be attacked by the Swedes: he was supported, however, by a subsidy from the Turkish sultan, whose power was seriously threatened by the combined arms of two imperial courts; and he entertained hopes of assistance from Great Britain and Prussia, whose activity was roused by the ambitious views of this northern confederacy, and by the distresses of the Ottoman Porte. Without engaging directly in the contest, they encouraged diversions both in Poland and Sweden; and when affairs



began to put on an unfavorable aspect for the Swedish monarch, they offered their mediation between the courts of Petersburg and Stockholm, which was rejected by Catharine. Their next step was to intimidate the prince of Denmark, who governed for his incapable father; and Mr. Elliott, the British envoy, acted on this occasion with becoming spirit; menacing the Danes with a combined attack from the Prussian army and the British fleet, if they should persist in their hostilities against the Swedes. The prince at first resented this interference; but at length, with the consent of the czarina, he promised to abstain from hostilities. Great efforts were made to bring the Turkish war to a conclusion, both by England and Prussia: an alliance between this latter power and the Porte was concluded early in the following year, and a Prussian army was assembled in Silesia. The death of Joseph II. and the disturbed state of his dominions, strengthened the hopes of pacification: the congress at Reichenbach was opened in June, 1790, and a truce ensued between Austria and the Porte; though the conclusion of the definitive peace was delayed, on account of some intermediate events and modifications, till the middle of the following year. The negociation with Russia was attended with greater difficulties: Catharine, already reconciled with Sweden, was not pleased with the high tone, which Prussia, and still more Great Britain, adopted in prescribing to her terms of the *status quo*. In vain did the English minister, amidst national murmurs, equip a fleet: Catharine declared her resolution to conclude the peace alone; and she did so. Thus, after four years of contest, the Ottoman power remained firm on its basis, though the war was replete with consequences: the most important of these was the establishment of the dominion of Russia on the Black Sea, where Cherson and Odessa were founded by Catharine, who planted not so much for herself as for future generations.

While the Austrian emperor had been prosecuting victories and conquests, from which he could derive no permanent advantage; he contrived to alienate from himself the affections of the most useful and industrious portion of his subjects. The people of the Netherlands had been among the earliest of the European states to cultivate agriculture, commerce, and manufactures; whence they soon acquired a considerable degree of political liberty: they consisted of independent states, resembling each other in manners, character, and constitution of government; their polity being composed of three orders, clergy, nobles, and people, under the limited principality of



one personage denominated count. Strongly attached to their ancient religion, and holding with intense faith the most extravagant tenets of the Roman catholic church; they also manifested a warm affection to their sovereign princes, especially those of the house of Austria: and this they abundantly showed during the distresses of Maria Theresa, by the resources of money and troops, with which they liberally supplied that princess: nor did they cease to cherish the same sentiments towards her son; until the restless spirit of innovation, which distinguished his character, interfered with their ancient privileges and religion;—two objects, of which the Netherlanders were peculiarly tenacious.

A violent desire of change, though it may at first veil itself under the respectable name of reform, is too apt to degenerate into a despotic spirit of rapacity and usurpation: this soon appeared in the conduct of the emperor Joseph; who, beginning with innovations in the ecclesiastical establishments, soon attacked their revenues; and having suppressed the most venerated judicial institutions, proceeded to appoint new tribunals, whose proceedings were marked with the secrecy of despotism: in addition to this, the legislature itself was subverted by a new edict; and the whole power of the assembly of the states being abrogated, a council of general government was instituted, as a political engine of the court minister placed at its head. While the people were justly indignant at the daring violation of that convention, by which alone the archduke of Austria held the sovereignty of the Netherlands, the despotism of Joseph proceeded to trample still farther on the constitution of this part of his dominions; for not content with having abolished the judicial courts and legislative assembly, he now attacked the clerical order; not, as before, by suppressing certain fraternities, least essential to the church; but by overthrowing those institutions which were the very nursery of its priesthood. The principal universities in the low countries were those of Louvain, the most celebrated seats of catholic theology, and most highly prized by the zealous votaries of the Roman church: but their colleges were abolished, and their privileges abrogated by an edict, requiring all youth designed for the priesthood to pursue their studies in a general seminary, under a new system, from which native teachers were excluded. Such a violation of the ecclesiastical constitution was warmly opposed both by the hierarchy and the people; strong remonstrances were made; and when the assembly of the states met, they refused to grant any subsidies,



unless national grievances were redressed. The ferment at length became so vehement and so general, that concessions were granted by the authorities; and a decree was issued, promising full reparation, which for a time diffused joy among all classes; until it was interrupted by a refusal of the emperor's ratification, and an order that the different states should send deputies to Vienna, to lay their subjects of complaint at the foot of the throne. To prevent matters, if possible, from coming to an extremity, the states submitted to this requisition, though they entrusted to their deputies very limited powers. Even while these were on their journey, large bodies of imperial troops were marched towards the Netherlands;—a measure, which contributed to agitate, without depressing the minds of the people, who resolved to maintain their liberties at every hazard of their lives and fortunes; and to this issue the contest soon came: for, after pretending to adopt a moderate system of conduct, until the Flemings had disbanded their militia, the emperor suddenly changed his tone; and, having removed the count Murray, whose lenient and conciliatory conduct had rendered him a favorite with the people, he appointed another commander in chief, who had no local connexions in the Netherlands: this was general Dalton, an Irish soldier of fortune, whose principle of conduct was direct obedience to his master's orders, whatever those might be, or whatever rights they might violate: he had been previously employed against the rebellious mountaineers of Transylvania, and was noted for the inhumanity with which he had treated his captives. The dictatorial conduct of this officer, and especially his menaces against the university of Louvain, soon produced a collision between the military and the citizens: blood was shed; and the act received marked approbation from Joseph, at the very time that, with flagrant duplicity, he was setting forth his tender affections for his subjects, and his desire of satisfying all their wishes: the interpreter, however, of his affections was the inexorable Dalton, who proceeded to establish the new seminary of Louvain at the point of the bayonet; and the admission of the imperial professors was celebrated by the murder of a large number of inhabitants. At Malines and Antwerp the massacre was still more extensive; and personal safety was deemed so precarious in the Netherlands, that numerous inhabitants of rank and property sought it in exile: confiscation, despotism, and military execution being once established, property, liberty, and life became so insecure, that men withdrew their



capital from manufactures and commerce, to vest it in foreign funds; so that trade became stagnant; the revenue proportionally decreased; and the states of Brabant, under the atrocious tyranny which prevailed, determined to withhold the supplies. Such was the state of affairs at the end of 1788.

Early in the present year, the emperor published an edict, annulling all former concessions, restoring every obnoxious establishment, and even recalling his inaugural oath. The grand council of Brabant having refused to sanction so despotic an act, that constitutional tribunal was suppressed; the management of the revenue, which had formed one of its departments, was vested in a commission; the appointment of abbots, who represented the chief order of the state, was prohibited; the commons were ordered to be remodelled; the right of granting subsidies was to be taken from the states; and the celebrated charter, called the 'joyous entry,' to be annulled. A considerable part of the year was employed in executing these weak and wicked projects of infatuated ambition. His enmity to the clergy, and his rapacious love of money, now urged the emperor to the most extensive and systematic schemes of pillage; for by one decree he sequestered all the abbeys of Brabant, and appropriated their revenues to his own use.

Such a violation of the rights of property in a country which had long enjoyed a free constitution, and such an instance of sacrilege among a people so devoutly attached to the priesthood, excited the resentment of the Flemings to the highest degree; and as there was a great resemblance in the conduct of Joseph and the minister of his arbitrary power, to that of his ancestor Philip and the duke of Alva; so a similar spirit of resistance was exhibited by the descendants of that brave people, who so nobly liberated themselves from an Austrian yoke in the sixteenth century. While the Flemish patriots were maintaining a close correspondence with the emigrants, and concerting together a scheme of open resistance, Dalton despatched a portion of his troops to seize every person suspected of disaffection; carrying the system of proscription and slaughter to a greater extent than ever, while Trautmansdorff, the civil governor, acted as an instrument of his oppression. A conspiracy to blow up the houses of these two tyrants with gunpowder, and open the gates of Brussels to the emigrants, in the month of August, being discovered, led to the infliction of summary punishment on multitudes, whether guilty or suspected; but about the middle of September, the duke d'Ursel, the prince d'Aremburg, and other nobles who had retired to



Breda, being joined by the archbishop of Malines and most of the states of Brabant, declared themselves a legal assembly, and drew up a remonstrance to the emperor, asserting their rights, and their resolution to maintain them: and while they professed themselves ready to sacrifice life and fortune for a sovereign who should govern them constitutionally, they adjured him to spare them the cruel necessity of appealing to God and their swords.

This declaration, instead of appeasing, only irritated the tyrant, who gave orders for increased severity, and the violence of military execution: the Belgians, therefore, seeing no hope of redress but in the sword, hoisted the standard of revolt in October; and a body of Brabanters, having drawn the imperialists who pursued them into the small town of Furnhout, obliged them to retreat with the loss of 700 men. Encouraged by this success, the other provinces took up arms, and joined their fellow patriots: in the beginning of November, the Austrian general Bender was repulsed from the town of Tirlemont, after an obstinate contest; the Netherlands took confidence, and met their foe in the open field; where, having gained a complete victory, they gained possession of Ostend, Bruges, and Louvain. Animated by these successes, they now assailed the strong city of Ghent; defeated the Austrians in its streets; and on the third day of the attack, obliged the enemy, who had taken shelter in the barracks, to surrender: the garrison in the citadel, finding that they could no longer maintain their post, evacuated it, after the most enormous excesses, which they had been encouraged to commit by orders from the emperor. The reduction of this place was of the utmost importance, as it enabled the states of Flanders to assemble in the capital of that province, for the purpose of legalising their proceedings, giving a form to their new constitution, and concluding a federal union with the other provinces. The emperor, however, when he heard of the unexpected success which attended the revolt, endeavored to deceive them with hopes of redress; to which he added the most terrific menaces, in case he should be obliged to relinquish the conquests he was now prosecuting, and pour his triumphant armies into their country: but the Flemings had been too often deceived by Joseph, to put any trust in his professions or his promises; while their recent successes taught them that they were no longer dependent on his power: on the twentieth of November, therefore, the states of Flanders seized on the sovereign authority in their province, to which, as they declared, the emperor had



forfeited all right and title: they also passed a resolution to organise an army, and unite themselves with the states of Brabant. Encouraged by these proceedings, the inhabitants of Brussels rose against their oppressors, and met with equal success: the savage Dalton, having retreated to the great square, was there obliged to capitulate, giving up the city on condition of being allowed to escape with his garrison; while Trautmansdorff and the other chief members of government withdrew to Liege. The Flemings, in their victories, imitated not the brutal conduct of the imperial troops, for they killed no one but in battle: having thus shown themselves worthy of success, and made themselves masters of the chief towns, they restored the ancient courts of justice, rescinded the emperor's innovating edicts, and settled the exercise of the sovereign power: the states of Brabant, being assembled at Brussels on the last day of the present year, bound themselves by oath to preserve the rights, privileges, and constitution of their country, and then administered the same oath to the members of the council: the other provinces also, having respectively settled their internal constitutions, with the exception of Luxemburg, formed themselves into a federal republic, by the title of the United Belgic States. Such was the result of the rapacity and usurpations of the Austrian emperor; and thus was the most important part of the continent prepared to meet the force of that revolutionary inundation, which was now rising to overwhelm the states of Europe. At the same time, we must not omit to notice, that a party existed in most countries, whose aim was to overturn the existing order of things: the efforts at revolution in several small states, such as Aix-la-Chapelle, and Geneva, which took place about this time, are so many instances of the democratic spirit which began to prevail; but the manner in which they were suppressed, though by armed mediation, gave evidence of the respect still entertained for the rights even of small states, and the efforts made to preserve the balance of European power.

All petty commotions, however, were soon lost in the eruption of that desolating volcano, whose throes began to be heard loud and deep in France, where we left prerogative vainly contending with the rising spirit of freedom, before which it was soon obliged to retreat. After the banishment of the duke of Orleans, and the imprisonment of the abbé Sabatier and M. Freteau, who had vehemently opposed the royal edict, a series of remonstrances ensued from the parliament to the king, and



of answers from his majesty ; in which principles so opposite to each other, in regard to the authority of the crown and the rights both of the parliament and the people, were so strenuously maintained, that any compromise or reconciliation was manifestly impossible ; and it was obvious that some great crisis was fast approaching : the parliament constantly referred to the original constitution of the French kingdom ; and the monarch appealed in support of his claims to the powers unquestionably exercised by his immediate predecessors. In order to relieve the king from these vexatious disputes, it was determined to hold a grand council, under the name of *la cour plenièrre*, possessing all the powers claimed by the parliaments ; those assemblies being reduced to their original state of judicial courts. The plan, however, became divulged, and the parliament of Paris proceeded to pass a censure on its principles ; when the king, indignant at being anticipated, ordered the arrest of the two principal speakers, d'Espremenil and Mosambert, who took refuge in the assembly, which speedily drew up a remonstrance against their seizure : the answer sent was a regiment of soldiers, who surrounded the house, and demanded the persons of the refractory members ; but the president declared that they must seize the whole assembly, for all of them were d'Espremenils. The house having been thus besieged, as it were, for nearly a day and a night, the two members in question rose and entreated that they might have liberty to surrender themselves : on which, they were taken into custody, and committed to prison.

The king now reverted to what was manifestly a hopeless expedient, a bed of justice ; and the parliament again protested against the *cour plenièrre*, as opposed to the rights of the nation, declaring that none of its members would accept a seat in it : this protest was followed by dissuasive letters from a portion of the nobles and bishops ; the court became alarmed ; and the design was abandoned : terror now pervaded all the departments of government ; while the archbishop of Toulouse fled before the storm which he was unable to allay, and took refuge in Italy. The king, harassed by the failure of all his designs, and forsaken by the minister who had brought him into his present state of embarrassment, was driven to adopt a total change of measures, and to recall the popular favorite Neckar, as well as to restore the parliament ; when the latter instantly burned the royal decrees for its suspension, in the presence of the populace. It has been observed by a clever periodical



writer,<sup>19</sup> that 'Neckar was a man made for national ruin: a charlatan, a *philosophe*, and a dealer in the stocks, he was a champion of that public confusion of interests which had made his fortune; a professor of that burlesque on science, political economy, which had enabled an obscure Swiss to talk of modelling governments, and to be an aspirant after those political honors which are to be secured by popular corruption. The rabble every where are rapid calculators; the French rabble the most rapid of all: they saw that Neckar had raised wealth out of nothing, and they took it for granted that the discoverer of this secret was the true financier for France. Neckar, whose folly alone palliates his crime, had the vanity to think that he was formed to be a statesman, undertook the task, pronounced that the age of universal restoration was at hand, called the whole tribe of philosophic rebels to his aid; and with loyalty on his lips, but ambition at his heart, again summoned the notables, and through them the states-general.'

This assembly was harmless in its original formation, consisting of 300 members from each order of the realm, nobles, clergy, and commons, who sat in separate chambers, and were a check on the proceedings of each other: the notables, who met on the sixth of November, 1788, recommended that arrangement to be adopted in the present instance; but the king was unfortunately prevailed on by Neckar to summon 600 of the *tiers état*, or commons, making that body numerically equal to the other two, while the edict was silent as to their sitting in distinct chambers; from which silence the total corruption of the assembly followed.

The states-general met on the fifth of May, in the present year, at Versailles; when the first act of the commons was to demand that the other two orders should join them in one chamber. Thrown into consternation by this proposal, both the nobles and the clergy refused compliance; and their refusal was interpreted as an insult against the majesty of the people. In the mean time, all public business was at a stand; until the *tiers état*, finding the popular cry strongly in their favor, declared themselves the real representatives of the nation; and intimating that they were about to assume the exclusive power of legislation, sent a message to the other orders, requiring their attendance as individuals. Intimidated by harangues in the assembly, and the lively interest thereby excited in Paris, some of the nobles and clergy now joined the *tiers état*; the

<sup>19</sup> In Blackwood's Magazine.



junction was hailed as a victory ; and the members thus united declared themselves the *legislature*, remodelled the house, and taking the name of the National Assembly, assumed virtually the government of the country. A few days after this decree was passed, the king in person proposed to the States, as he still denominated them, a plan for a new constitution ; stating, among other regulations, that no new tax should be proposed, no money borrowed, without the consent of the states-general ; that all exemptions from the payment of taxes, all oppressive rights and services, should cease ; that personal freedom should be secured, provincial states established, and justice administered both in civil and criminal courts with strict impartiality : in short, he proposed such a reform, as at an earlier period would probably have satisfied the great bulk of the nation, and put an end to future dissensions ; but being unsuited to the views of those who were now masters of the assembly, was rejected with disdain.

A majority of the clergy, and many of the nobles, having joined the *tiers état* ; the remaining members of those orders, at the earnest desire of the king himself, followed their example on the twenty-seventh of June : this compliance, intended for the purpose of conciliation, only imparted additional influence to the revolutionary faction. ‘The family was united,’ as was observed by Bailly ; ‘but it gave few hopes of domestic union or tranquillity.’ The truth of this soon appeared in the decrees proceeding from that legislative body, totally at variance with institutions that had existed from time immemorial, and which were considered only as preparatory steps to the establishment of a new system of government. As the ground-work of such a system, the national assembly published, at the end of August, a declaration of the rights of men and citizens, utterly inconsistent, not only with monarchical government, but with the true end of all civil polity ;—the security of individuals, and the tranquillity of the public.

The proceedings at Versailles were encouraged and promoted by events at Paris ; the municipality of which city, self-constituted from the electors of that city, raised its head, and, in common with many other clubs and societies, forwarded an address of congratulation to the national assembly : the Palais Royal now began to exhibit scenes of gross disorder ; seditious assemblies and journals daily multiplied ; declaimers harangued in every street ; and the lowest classes drank freely of the intoxicating spirit of politics : the triumph of the *tiers état* had suspended the action of all law ; and a pretext alone was



required to produce open insurrection, with an essay of arms : this was not long wanting ; for when the moral power and influence of a government is defeated, it may rely on being soon driven to make trial of its physical force.

A short time previous to the open exhibition of popular discontents, the household troops had been disbanded : orders at the same time were issued, prohibiting the advancement of any one, save a noble, to the rank of officer ; and the severities of the Prussian discipline were introduced into the ranks of the French army : the soldiery, therefore, became almost as prone to insubordination as the people. On the last day of June, 300 of the French guards quitted their barracks, and visited the Palais Royal, where they were received with exultation : being placed in confinement on returning to their quarters, the populace broke in, and set them at liberty : this was the first triumph of the mob ; foreign troops were in the mean time pouring into Versailles ; and the count d'Artois, with his friend, the baron de Breteuil, undertook the task of stopping the march of revolution : in this project he had the countenance of the queen, whose indignation prompted her to approve of decisive measures, when taken up too late, and by the most imbecile agents. On the eleventh of July, this party had overcome the scruples of the king ; Neckar was dismissed, and Breteuil succeeded him in the ministry ; but the court was anticipated in the recurrence to force, which would have been now too late if employed on the side of monarchy. On the day after Neckar's dismissal, Camille Desmoulins, a low demagogue of the Palais Royal, made this the desired pretext for exciting the Parisian mob : as he was leading them in procession, with the busts of Neckar and the duc d'Orleans crowned with laurel, they encountered a German regiment ; blows and shots were exchanged ; a soldier of the royal guards was said to have fallen in the ranks of the people ; for which cause, and from previous jealousy, a large body of the guards issued from their barracks, and fired on the foreign troops ; the Germans returned it, and dispersed the mob : they then retired, with a desire of sparing the farther effusion of blood ; but were followed by the populace, who with cries of vengeance, hastened in search of arms : the shops of the gunsmiths were immediately plundered ; and the Hotel de Ville, where the electors sat as a self-constituted municipality, delivered up all that were preserved in that establishment : they ordered the enrolment of a civic guard ; a vain and late attempt to separate the armed citizen from the armed ruffian : in the mean



time, the national assembly, instead of assuming to itself the power which it had so fiercely claimed, and proclaiming itself the defender of a constitution of its own making, exhibited nothing but timidity, and a mean-spirited adulation of the mob: it even went so far as to address the king, for the purpose of dismissing his foreign regiments, and giving up Paris to the new civic army. The unfortunate monarch, startled by this apparent determination to overthrow his government, exhibited more than usual firmness, and refused to accede to the proposal: but while this miserable and shrinking assembly was impelled by La Fayette to press it again on his acceptance, the multitude took the power into their own hands, and proceeded through Paris to the Hotel of the Invalids, the arsenal of which afforded them a supply of muskets, and, what was much more important, of artillery: thus provided, they marched to the Bastille; and if they had been content with levelling to the ground that odious den of arbitrary power, who could have blamed their impetuosity?

Not satisfied however with the capture of the fortress, and the murder of de Launay, its governor, in cold blood, they marched in triumph to the Hotel de Ville, where the municipality had chosen Hesselles, provost of the merchants, as their president, who weakly undertook to amuse them by the promise of arms, at the same time indicating where they might be found. Exasperated by finding this information false, they fell on the unfortunate magistrate; and, having severed his head from the body, carried it, together with that of de Launay, in barbarian triumph through the streets.

In the mean time, where was the count d'Artois and Breteuil, with their bold projects? Louis saw at once their weakness and incapacity: abandoning, therefore, their counsels in disgust, he hurried to the assembly, to declare his sincere cordiality with it, and to crave its support in the restoration of tranquillity; at the same time announcing that orders were given to remove the foreign troops from the capital. Seeing the popular party thus victorious, the count d'Artois, the prince de Condé, the Polignacs, and many other inveterate courtiers, took their departure from France, as precipitate to fly as they had been tardy to act.

The national assembly, being thus master of the sovereign, sent a deputation, to thank the Parisians, and to reorganise the authorities of the capital: Bailly, a man of letters and of integrity, headed this deputation, and was chosen to preside over the municipality, as mayor of Paris; while La Fayette



was appointed to command the armed force, miscalled the national guard, as it was chiefly composed of disbanded soldiers: the Parisians were then told that Louis was cordially united with the national assembly: 'he has been hitherto deceived,' said the deputies; 'but he now sees the merit and justice of the popular cause.' The enthusiasm which this explanation caused was general, but transient: the suspicions of the populace soon returned; and in a few hours they recommenced their clamors, demanding the presence of the king in his capital to assure them personally of his intentions: Bailly, the new mayor, promised to do his utmost for their gratification; but he already perceived that some mysterious agent was at work, bribing and exciting the people to fresh acts of sedition: this was no other than the duke of Orleans, whom a party among the national assembly desired to place at the head of the new republican constitution as lieutenant-general of France: his nerve, however, was not found equal to this daring outrage; and he fled to England, when the time approached for putting it into execution.

On the seventeenth, Louis anticipated the populace, who were desirous of carrying him to Paris, by stating his readiness to visit the capital: arrived at its gates, he was welcomed by the mayor in the following short but pithy address, the antithesis of which contained a bitter truth:—'I present to your majesty the keys of the good city of Paris; the same which were presented to Henry IV.: he reconquered his people; here the people have reconquered their king.' After this, there was a public procession, where all wore the tricolored cockade, which the king himself assumed cheerfully at the Hotel de Ville, and requested the mayor to state for him to the municipality, that he heartily approved of their acts. After this adhesion to the principles of the revolution, the unfortunate monarch hastened to Versailles; rejoiced to escape from his capital, and the fraternity of its ruffian populace.

In the mean time, famine had been adding its horrors to the scene: Foulon, superintendent of the revenue, a detested member of a detested profession, was seized by the people, who dragged him to the Hotel de Ville, urging his condemnation with the most violent exclamations: in vain the municipality declared they were not a court of justice; in vain did they enter into the form of a trial in order to gain time; in vain did La Fayette plead eloquently for his liberation: the rabble, impatient of delay, rushed into the hall, from whence they tore their victim, and hanged him at a lamp-post: his



son-in-law, Berthier, shared the same fate; and La Fayette threw up his command in disgust, but was persuaded to resume it.

On the fourth of August, the attention of the national assembly was called to excesses committed by the lower orders in the provinces, after the example of the capital; when it was observed, that their resentment was justly called forth against the upholders of *taille* and *corvée*, and feudal abuses: on this, the count de Noailles moved to abolish *corvées*, and all other marks of personal servitude: the duc d'Aiguillon seconded him; and the highest nobles of the land came forward to sacrifice all seignorial rights, jurisdictions, and immunities: the clergy followed the example; and in a moment of excitement, the proudest aristocracy, and the most unbending church in Europe, reduced themselves to a level with the people; giving up all those rights, to preserve which in their utmost plenitude, they had long risked, and now precipitated, the fall of the monarchy. Thus closed the first act of this celebrated tragedy in the annihilation of those privileges and immunities which had so long weighed down the state, and which would have rendered a revolution unavoidable, even if other causes had not existed to produce a convulsion. It is not our province to write a regular history of this great event; but its effects had so extensive an influence on British policy, its causes were so variously interpreted, the actors and sufferers in its scenes bore such prominent parts in the annals of our times;—that it would be unpardonable to omit that description of its progress, which is necessary to throw light on British transactions; or that investigation of its causes, which may help to guard posterity against the recurrence of its evils: considering, therefore, this event apart from those fears and prejudices which once disturbed the imaginations and distorted the ideas of almost all who described it; casting aside the views of party writers, among whom some extolled it as the acme of human justice and divine retribution, while others reprobated every one concerned in its transactions as possessed with a demoniacal spirit of innovating fury or atheistical profanation; confessing that a revolution was desirable, though lamenting that it was accompanied by so dreadful a display of vice and profligacy;—we shall notice the causes of this political convulsion, as they are divided into three classes, remote, intermediate, and proximate. The first of these originated with the privileged orders and the monarch; and were such as must render a revolution inevitable in any



country whatever, while human nature remains unchanged. Unfortunately for France, no institution existed, like our parliament, to assert the rights and keep alive the spirit of liberty in the middle ranks of society: the seigniorial rights therefore of the *noblesse*, and the feudal burdens of the *bourgeoisie*, which were always more extensive and oppressive in France than in England, remained unbroken in the former country; and continued to be exercised and exacted, even when commerce, riches, and civilisation had qualified the commons to demand a larger share of political importance: this evil was rendered intolerable by the power which the monarch possessed of imposing taxes on the people by his sole authority, and of granting exemptions from their operation by patents of nobility, sold for money, or annexed to employments: exemptions might have been suffered, if they had been confined to the few families of the high *noblesse*; but when by sale or improvident grants the privileged families became augmented to the number of 30,000, this distinction could be no longer endured. Intimately connected also with these causes of revolution, was the general wish which prevailed to destroy the power and wealth of a corrupt church: indeed, the immunities and privileges of the higher orders of ecclesiastics were little inferior to those of the nobles; and as all dignified and lucrative offices in the church, like the higher commissions in the army, were rigidly confined to the privileged class of nobility, popular envy produced popular hatred; and nothing was contemplated with greater eagerness than the confiscation of ecclesiastical revenues. Such principally were the remote, but constantly increasing causes of the French revolution: among the intermediate ones, may be enumerated the expensive wars of Louis XIV.; his expenditure in buildings, and other unnecessary works; his expulsion of the protestants; and his unwise policy in bringing the nobility around his court: for though the feudal lord is the oppressor of his vassals, he often confers kindness on them: removed to court, he becomes known to them only through his agents; and while his oppressions are increased, his benefits are withheld. Nor must we forget the profligacy of Louis XV. and the reign of his mistresses; by which the expenditure of the court and the necessities of government became so excessive, that it was found impracticable to raise the revenue without having recourse to the meanest arts and the most oppressive exactions: in short, the finances verged on a state of ruin; while the vices of the monarch, imitated by his courtiers, and extending their influence in circles over the whole



surface of society, produced corruption in the very heart and core of the nation.

In this state of things, numerous were the proximate and accelerating causes of national ruin. Philosophy, falsely so called, assailed the religion of the state; and finding the out-works which the national church had thrown around it weak and fragile, she soon demolished them, and stormed the citadel: thus the strongest support of civil polity vanished, and left the people a prey to faction, libertinism, and all the evils which unrestrained passions can produce. Then came the American war; and the part which France took in it, was like that of a madman, who plunges a torch into a magazine of combustibles. When the French army returned from the colonies, her officers and men were inflamed by a knowledge and a love of liberty, which had never before existed in their native country; and the consequences were foreseen by all persons of discernment and reflection: clubs and societies for the dispersion of new doctrines and new sentiments were extensively formed; among the members of which, were found many, whose privileges were the grand object of attack, and who fell among the first victims of revolutionary caprice. In the mean time, the finances became more and more disordered; while the most incapable persons, and theorists of the most opposite opinions, were employed to restore them: these, after some ineffectual struggles, having quarrelled with the parliament, convened the notables, and attempted to make trial of a *cour plénière*, threw up the government in despair into the hands of the states-general: there, the commons, being superior in numbers, zeal, and intelligence to the privileged orders, drew the latter into the vortex prepared for them, and the revolution was complete: some blood indeed was then shed; but the abolition of privilege was the grand object of pursuit. Whether, when this object was gained, and the king had accepted the new constitution, the farther effusion of blood, with all the horrors of revolutionary convulsion, might have been avoided, and a constitutional monarchy, free from the abuses of the old system, established,—must now remain matter of conjecture; but historic truth obliges us to confess that few characters could have been found less adapted to cope with the awful circumstances of the times, than that of Louis XVI.; a monarch, too merciful and benevolent to adopt those measures of severity that were necessary to coerce his revolted subjects; too vacillating and insincere to command their respect and confidence: at the same time, he was peculiarly unfortunate in the partner of his



throne : when Louis acknowledged the powers of the national assembly, and accepted the government established by them, he virtually relinquished the rights exercised by his immediate predecessors : but the restless and ambitious mind of Marie Antoinette, educated from early years in the principles of arbitrary power, could never abandon the wish of re-establishing the old system : she vehemently urged her husband to restore it ; and his efforts to effect her wish were a violation of that faith which he had pledged, when he consented to retain his crown under the new constitution.

By that constitution, the privileges, exemptions, and immunities, which feudal times had attached to certain classes, were abolished ; and the middle ranks, victorious in their struggle with the court and aristocracy, succeeded to the place which those classes had held in the state : at the same time, they succeeded, in great measure, to the difficulties and envy of their situation : Bailly and La Fayette were the representatives of their opinions ; and for the present, held the executive, as it were, of the revolutionary realm : but already the artisans and working classes began to feel the weight above them, and to consider the simple burgesses as aristocrats : at present, however, they were without leaders ; and the existence of royalty averted for a time the struggle between the two parties.

A considerable interval elapsed without any flagrant acts of violence : the assembly was busy in fixing the basis of the new constitution, the municipality in procuring bread for the metropolis, and Neckar in expedients to raise money, when neither tax could be levied, nor loan procured : during this time, however, the court party recovered from its terrors, and the populace resumed its suspicion and impatience : each entered into plans of its own ; while the middle classes, together with the assembly, were destined to submit to that which should prove victorious : their leaders, indeed, made every exertion to preserve the tranquillity of the capital ; but famine continued to prevail : the court was accused of augmenting it ; and the cry of the people was, 'To Versailles ; and let us seek bread from the king !' This disposition of the populace was far from displeasing to the aristocratic party, who now wished to drive the monarch into an open breach with the revolutionists : they saw no hope but in civil war. M. de Bouillé, a noble, and a general beloved by his soldiers, commanded at Metz, an important city on the frontiers ; and to him the thoughts of the



queen and her counsellors were now turned as the restorer of the monarchy.

In the midst of this, came the deputation from Paris to the assembly; and the court, full of its warlike sentiments, brought the regiment of Flanders to Versailles, and surrounded itself with soldiers: the municipality of Paris became alarmed; La Fayette himself spoke openly of a plot against liberty; and the mob caught the suspicion. On the second of October, a *fête* was given by the body guards to the newly-arrived officers, and those of the national guard of Versailles: the soldiers were admitted, and wine was given them, in which they drank to the health of the queen and the king, while the banqueters pledged them with drawn swords: in the midst of these effusions of loyalty, Marie Antoinette appeared with the dauphin, and the most enthusiastic vows were repeated for the support of the royal cause.

A pretext for exciting tumult was now afforded to the agitators, both in the assembly, and at Paris: Petion, Robespierre, Gregoire, and other leaders of the democrats gave vent to the most revolutionary language, and began to accuse and threaten Mirabeau, the principal representative of the middle classes. The only hope then left for Louis was to have allied himself cordially with this latter party, while the ultra-revolutionists were yet powerless: but it was on this very day that he was advised to dissent from the vote of the assembly, and to reject their constitution. In the afternoon, the rabble of Paris, with a horde of monsters in the shape of women, reached Versailles; the well-known excesses took place at the palace, where the queen escaped midnight assassination only by the devotion of her body guard; and La Fayette, by retiring to rest, when the person of his sovereign was committed to his care, affixed an indelible stigma on his own name. Next day, the removal of the royal family to Paris was effected; and the heads of the unfortunate defenders of their monarch, fixed on pikes, adorned this procession of the *poissardes*: the imprudence of the courtiers served both as a cause and pretext to this disaster, of which La Fayette and the assembly were mere spectators: they followed the king to Paris, where they kept themselves afloat, with difficulty, and only for a short time, amidst the crimes, corruption, and terrors, in which that unfortunate capital was involved.

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## CHAP. XXXIII.

## GEORGE III. (CONTINUED.)—1790.

State of parties at the breaking out of the French revolution, &c.  
—Meeting of parliament—Difference of opinion regarding events in France between Burke, Fox, &c., leading to a grand schism of the whigs—Quarrel between Burke and Sheridan—Motion to repeal the corporation and test acts rejected—Part acted by the dissenters in general polity—Mr. Flood's motion for a reform in parliament withdrawn—Scheme of finance—State of East Indian finances—Sums voted for services and losses—Evidence heard on the slave trade—Mr. Hastings's trial—Affair of Nootka-sound with the Spaniards—Session closes—Parliament dissolved—Affair of Nootka-sound adjusted—Comments on it in both houses—Proposed manner of meeting the expenses—Continental affairs—State of parties in England—Death of Howard the philanthropist.

WE are now approaching the most awful period in the annals of the world. Storms had been long gathering in the political horizon, destined to try the strength of every institution raised by man: vast evils had been let loose on the earth; and the spirit of French anarchy went forth to revolutionise the globe. The ensuing contest will be on a scale immeasurably greater than all which preceded it: we shall see, not armies against armies, but kingdoms against kingdoms; not empires, but continents convulsed; so that all former strifes and struggles, victories and defeats, will appear, by the comparison, like the play of children.

The proceedings in France, which we have already narrated, could not fail to attract the anxious notice of other European states; especially those, to which the emigrant nobles, who deserted their monarch in distress, had carried their ancient prejudices and exasperated feelings.

In England most persons beheld the phenomena with pleasure; but some looked on them with suspicion and jealousy, others with anxiety and alarm: the greater part of those who rejoiced, concluded that a change from the old system of de-



spotism must be an improvement ; and trusted that the alterations would produce a government in France, similar to that which they themselves enjoyed : thus the generous feelings of Englishmen sympathised with the assertors of liberty, before they had time and opportunity to ascertain its effects on the character and situation of its new votaries : even statesmen of high rank and talent presumed that French liberty would render the people happy ; and, imputing the frequent aggressions of France on this and other nations to the corrupt ambition of her court, they anticipated tranquillity from her renovated state, and rejoiced at a change which promised peace to Europe. But it is not to be disguised, that this country contained also a class of discontented speculative men, who had long considered England herself deficient in the liberty which their fancy represented as agreeable to man's natural rights, even in a state of civilised society. These persons admired the French legislators, who took the pole-star of reason as their guide, in preference to the narrow and despised forms of precedent or authority ; and who made that principle the basis of government, instead of modifying it according to the rules of expediency : nor were there wanting men of profligate lives and broken fortunes, who had long discarded all moral and religious principles from their souls ; a desperate faction, who longed for the overthrow of government and the confiscation of property ; in whose minds crimes changed their nature ; plunder becoming justice, treason patriotism, and the denial of a God the perfection of human reason.

At this alarming period, Englishmen experienced the blessing of an upright king and a virtuous aristocracy : when monarchy was denounced by their neighbors, they could turn to its representative among themselves, and see a standard of excellence, round which all ranks might rally : they could see him too in the midst of a court, as far removed from the gloomy fanaticism of the Escorial, as it was from the splendid debaucheries of Versailles.

This moral influence of the court was nobly aided by the vigor and policy of him who directed the helm of government. The wisdom of Mr. Pitt had removed the principal materials by which faction is nourished ; for while he exhibited a readiness to reform abuses, and to uphold the principles of civil liberty ; his great financial skill, and the reform which he had carried through every branch of revenue and expenditure, so increased the public resources, that commerce, trade, and agriculture were all flourishing ; the burdens of the country



were fast decreasing ; and that immense debt which the late war had left, was in a fair way of being discharged. Up to this period, nay, up to that, when, impelled by external circumstances, he entered into war with republican France, and boldly linked the destinies of England with those of the continent, the character of Mr. Pitt will bear the strictest scrutiny : and it is grievous to think that its bright surface should afterwards have been stained by any unseemly spots. Surely, there must be something in the possession of power, which alters the nature of its possessor : otherwise, it is difficult to conceive, how the man, who began his ministerial career with such unflinching integrity, such a spirit of economy and reform ; should have indulged in that reckless profusion of public money, the effects of which we so severely feel at the present day ; that he should have relaxed in the prosecution of great principles, which he had formerly advocated with all the force of eloquence ; that he should have employed the petty arts of parliamentary corruption, prostituted church patronage,<sup>20</sup> overloaded the country with

<sup>20</sup> 'About a month before the death of the bishop of Carlisle,' says bishop Watson, in his Autobiography, 'a relation of Sir James Lowther had preached the commencement sermon at Cambridge. Mr. Pitt happened to sit next me at church, and asked me the name of the preacher, not much approving his performance : I told him, report said he was to be the next bishop of Carlisle ; and I begged him to have some respect to the dignity of the bench, whenever a vacancy happened : he assured me that he knew nothing of such an arrangement. Within two months after this, Sir James Lowther applied to Mr. Pitt for the bishopric of Carlisle, for the gentleman whom he had heard preach ; and Mr. Pitt without the least hesitation promised it. This was one of the many transactions that gave me an unfavorable opinion of Mr. Pitt. I saw that he was ready to sacrifice things the most sacred to the furtherance of his ambition.' p. 189. One of Mr. Pitt's great errors was a neglect of the church, which was not brought properly into contact with the population that so rapidly increased under his administration. Not a single new church was erected during the time that the population was doubling itself : thus a vast body of dissenters grew up ; and their rights, though resisted, could not be defeated. The great extent of dissent arose, in a great measure, from want of a better distribution of church property and preferment. 'It is rare,' says an eminent divine, 'to find a minister, who can have the magnanimity to divest himself of political considerations in the discharge of a sacred trust placed in his hands for the good of the church—the distribution of the ecclesiastical patronage of the crown.' Dr. Valpy's Sermons, vol. ii. p. 373, note.



placemen and sinecurists, and opened as wide as possible every channel of expenditure, for the purpose of securing that influence, which was already based on his just and prudent policy, and would certainly have adhered to the same independent line of conduct. Still, notwithstanding this, when we reflect on the dangers from which the bold, energetic conduct of this minister rescued the country at the out-breaking of the French revolution, and the policy by which he prepared the country to sustain a just and necessary war, the greatest too that was ever waged by any nation ; we must acknowledge that a vast debt of gratitude is due to the memory of Pitt.

Parliament met on the twenty-first of January, 1790 : in the royal speech, his majesty only glanced at the affairs of the continent, by observing that they had engaged his serious attention ; but lord Valletort, in moving the address, took occasion to contrast the tranquil and prosperous state of this country with the anarchy and licentiousness that prevailed in France ; and to stigmatise the revolution as the most disastrous and fatal event to the interests of that country, which had ever taken place since the foundation of its monarchy : the applause with which these sentiments were received by the greater part of the house, sufficiently indicated the opinion entertained of the late transactions by the majority of British senators : the subject was resumed in the debates which took place on the fifth and ninth of February, relative to the army estimates ; when a new champion of established rights arose, to denounce the French revolution in its origin, its conduct, and its ultimate aim ; to renounce even his political connexions and his dearest friends in support of his opinions ; to carry on, while life lasted, an interminable war against jacobinical principles ; and, by laying before his countrymen the horrors of democracy, with unwearied energy, and a matchless extent of knowledge, to bear an illustrious part in the work of national preservation. It is scarcely possible to set a greater value than they deserve on the services rendered by this highly-gifted man to his country ; where factious demagogues hailed the progress of revolutionary fury as the march of reason ; professing to see nothing but illumination in the firebrand which France was waving over all the thrones of Europe, and nothing but an enthusiastic devotion to liberty in clamors for the confiscation of property, and the blood of its possessors. While the external acts of this dangerous faction were coerced by Mr. Pitt's energetic policy, the contagion of its principles was forcibly arrested by



those splendid productions that issued from the pen of Mr. Burke ; in which his fancy laid all nature under tribute, collecting riches from every scene of the creation, and from every walk of art, to illuminate his pages. But though candor impels us to acknowledge the superlative merit of these compositions, as adapted to the purpose for which they were written ; truth obliges us to confess that they contain sentiments and principles opposed to general happiness and to constitutional liberty. When Mr. Burke, in his exclusive sympathy for the fallen throne and ruined aristocracy of France, had no commiseration left for the people who had suffered so many accumulated evils under the subverted government, he laid himself open to the just rebuke of Paine, who exclaimed in metaphorical language, the beauty of which was scarcely ever surpassed, ‘ Mr. Burke pities the plumage, but forgets the dying bird.’ Again, when he asserted, that man completely abdicates and surrenders all his natural rights by entering into society ; and that the only rights which he retains are created by the compact which holds together the society of which he is a member ; the fallacy of his proposition was shown by Sir James Mackintosh from the conclusions to which it leads : ‘ Civil inequalities,’ said that acute reasoner, ‘ or, more correctly, civil distinction, must exist in the social body, because it must possess organs destined for different functions ; but political inequality is inconsistent with the principles of natural right, and the object of civil institution : men retain a right to a share in their own government, because the exercise of the right by one man is not inconsistent with its possession by another ; which is evidently the only case where the surrender of a natural right can be exacted by society : the slightest deviation from this doctrine legitimates every tyranny : if the only criterion of governments be the supposed convention which forms them, all are equally legitimate ; for the only interpreter of the convention is the usage of the government, which is thus preposterously made its own standard : if governors therefore abide by the maxims of the constitution which they administer, and tyrannise by precedent, in reverent imitation of the models consecrated by usage, there is no remedy for the oppressed ; since an appeal to the rights of nature were treason against the principles of the social union. If, indeed, any offence against precedent be committed, this theory may, though most inconsistently, permit resistance ; but as long as the forms of any government are



preserved, it possesses, in a view of justice, whatever be its nature, equal claims to obedience.'<sup>1</sup>

The merit, however, and efficacy of Mr. Burke's writings were scarcely diminished by the few false principles with which they were interspersed. At the period of which we are treating, the constitution of a neighboring kingdom was in a state of conflagration, and our own was caught by the flames: who then can severely blame the man, who assisted in so eminent a degree to extinguish them, though he may have drawn from a stream that was not wholly free from impurities? The faithful historian, however, who is unshackled by the fetters of party, will not be deterred, by the sanction of a great name, from pointing out any principles, from whatever quarter they may proceed, which appear dangerous to the constitutional fabric.<sup>2</sup> In the present times, the democratic spirit is abroad, and in full activity; but it is not to be repressed by opposing to it privileges and prerogatives made for the sole benefit of the few: indeed, the persevering attempts to uphold obsolete and unjust rights, have chiefly provoked those encroachments which are so much complained of; and if it were possible, in the present state of knowledge, to choke the expression of popular sentiments for a time, what would be the consequence? The disgorged matter, cast down the volcanic abyss, would soon be returned with a terrible explosion. Changes in government are rendered necessary by the progress of time and intelligence; and although resistance to

<sup>1</sup> 'Mr. Burke's doctrines also,' says Sir James, 'are virtually contradicted by the laws of all nations. Were his opinions true, the language of laws should be permissive, not restrictive. Had men surrendered all their rights into the hands of the magistrate, should he not announce the portion he was pleased to return them, not the part of which he is compelled to deprive them?' *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, p. 215.

<sup>2</sup> That these views of Mr. Burke involved such principles, is the opinion of many men of high character and intelligence. 'It is pretended,' said the late Robert Hall, 'that the moment we quit a state of nature, as we have given up the control of our actions in return for the superior advantages of law and government, we can never appeal again to any original principles; but must rest content with the advantages that are secured by the terms of the society. These are the views which distinguish the political writings of Mr. Burke; an author, whose splendid and unequalled powers have given a vogue and a fashion to certain tenets, which from any other pen would have appeared abject and contemptible.' *Apology for the Freedom of the Press, &c.* 8vo. edition, p. 52.



change is useful, in preventing the machine of government from attaining too rapid a motion; yet that resistance ought to be founded on right principles; not such as a peculiar class of politicians have endeavored to draw from the writings of Burke.

In the first of the debates already alluded to, on the fifth of February, Mr. Fox, whose ardor in the cause of liberty was not always accompanied with a sound judgment, had the temerity, while panegyrising the French revolution, to pronounce a direct eulogy on the revolt of the guards: this was met, at the time, by a storm of reprobation from the insulted feelings of the house; but on the ninth, Mr. Burke particularly adverted to the danger of such opinions, sanctioned by the authority of so great a name: then, entering at large into the subject, he delivered the first of those splendid harangues, which were as the sound of a trumpet to the hearts of Englishmen. 'The French,' said he, 'have shown themselves the ablest architects of ruin that have hitherto appeared in the world: in one short summer they have completely pulled down their monarchy, their church, their nobility, their law, their army, and their revenue. Were we absolute conquerors, with France prostrate at our feet, we should blush to impose on them terms so destructive to their national consequence, as the duration they have imposed on themselves. Our present danger is that of being led from admiration, to imitate the excesses of a people, whose government is anarchy, and whose religion is atheism.' He declared his concern at hearing this strange thing called a revolution in France, compared with the glorious event called the revolution in England; and then he instituted a parallel between the two; showing how thoroughly they differed from each other, and how Great Britain had risen beyond the standard of her former self, because she commenced with reparation, not with ruin. He declared, that he had never loved despotism in any land; he had not loved it the more for its being in France: but there was a despotism more dreadful than ever was wielded by the monarch of any civilised people; and that was, 'the despotism of an unprincipled, ferocious, tyrannical democracy; of a democracy, which had not a single virtue of republicanism to redeem its crimes. This was so far from being worthy of imitation, as had been said by his honorable friend, that it was worthy of all abhorrence; and he would spend the last drop of his blood, would quit his best friends, and join his most avowed enemies, to oppose the least influence of such a spirit in England.'



This declaration was received with much applause by a majority of the house ; and from it may be dated the grand schism which took place among the whigs. Mr. Pitt was loud in praise of the orator ; and Mr. Fox, perceiving that the question descended to a point of personal feeling, endeavored to soothe the irritation which had taken possession of his friend's mind. He declared, ' that he had ever felt the highest veneration for the judgment of his honorable friend, by whom he had been instructed more than by all other men and books together ; by whom he had been taught to love our constitution ; from whom he had acquired nearly all his political knowledge, certainly all that he most valued. His speech on that day, some arguments and observations excepted, was among the wisest and most brilliant that were ever delivered in the house : still, however, with all these admissions, his opinion on the general subject remained unaltered.' Mr. Burke acknowledged these expressions, dictated as they were by the sincerity of friendship, in a courteous reply ; but it was evident that from this moment they must come to a separation in their parliamentary course. The disruption of their friendly connexion was probably hastened by the angry observations of Mr. Sheridan, who used his strongest expressions to resuscitate the sunken fires of debate ; charging Mr. Burke with ' deserting from the camp, to defend despotism, and assail the principles of freedom ; with obtruding himself on the house as the libeller of liberty, and the enemy of men who were laboring for the noblest objects.' Mr. Burke immediately rose, to express his indignation at language, ' which ought to have been spared, were it only a sacrifice to the Manes of departed friendship ; language, indeed, not new, since it was only a repetition of what was to be heard at the reforming clubs and societies with which the honorable gentleman had lately become entangled, and for whose plaudits he had chosen to sacrifice his friends ; though he would in time discover that the value of such praise was hardly worth the price paid for it. Henceforward, they were separated in politics for ever.' An attempt was afterwards made by the leaders of the party to reconcile two persons, whose talents were so conspicuous ; but as the majority inclined to give sentence against Sheridan with regard to the quarrel ; that gentleman took such deep offence, that for nearly twelve months he abstained from parliamentary discussions.

Mr. Burke had now taken up the position for which he seemed to be destined. Swayed by strong impulses of personal feeling, with a temper impatient of control, and an



imagination prone to magnify facts which impressed him with alarm or hope, with an unlimited command of language, and a copiousness of imagery misleading almost as much as it illustrated or enforced, he exposed himself to many and serious accusations: but it may be doubted whether less of passion and prejudice than he possessed, would have been compatible with the peculiar station which he occupied. In an age of revolution, his genius was the great counteracting force: he stood alone against the impulses communicated to European society by the philosophers of France, whose influence on men's imaginations, in those stirring times, was not to be met by the ordinary mode of dispassionate reasoning: their enthusiasm could be successfully resisted only by enthusiasm, similar in degree, but different in kind. He soon gave proof of ability in the arduous task which he had undertaken, by his memorable work, intitled 'Reflections on the Revolution of France;' the very announcement of which, at the present period, excited the strongest curiosity and the most anxious expectations in the public mind.

Mr. Pitt, for the present, preserved a cautious and politic silence as to the merits of the French revolution; contenting himself with lavishing applause on his new ally for that zealous and seasonable attachment which he had displayed to the principles of the British constitution. The spirit, however, with which the government was now actuated, appeared with less reserve in their conduct towards the dissenters, who, since the encouragement they had received last session relative to a repeal of the corporation and test acts, had used unremitting efforts to increase their parliamentary interest: they had held provincial meetings in all parts of the kingdom; and by their public resolutions, not only gave unequivocal proofs of joy at the late proceedings of the French people; but, in contemplation of a general election, earnestly recommended the friends of equal and universal liberty to the choice of electors. On the other hand, the clergy of the establishment were not inert: jealous of encroachment on those exclusive privileges which they conceived necessary for the preservation of true religion, and alarmed at the downfall of the Gallican church, they also formed associations, passed counter-resolutions, and revived with remarkable success the cry of 'the church in danger.' The press overflowed with publications on both sides: every dissenting minister who could wield a pen, conceived that his duty to God and the interests of society called on him to promulgate



his sentiments, and flattered himself with unfading laurels for the success of his exertions ; while an equal number of champions among the inferior clergy promised themselves immediate promotion to the highest dignities in the church, from the zeal and ability which they put forth in the opposite cause. Posterity will hardly credit the ardor of these two contending parties ; the one leaving no earthly means untried to procure the repeal of laws which had been long reduced to a dead letter ; while the other supported, with equal vehemence, two obsolete statutes enacted in a state of society totally different from the present ; and predicted ruin to the state, should soldiers and excisemen be permitted to exercise their respective callings without the solemn intervention of a sacramental test. Instead of Mr. Beaufoy, the friend and partisan of Pitt, Mr. Fox was requested by the dissenters to move the repeal of the two acts in question ; and on the second of March he brought forward his motion, which he supported by an extraordinary display of talent. The minister, who had opposed the former applications with temper and moderation, now applied some well-merited expressions of indignation to the conduct of the dissenters ; who, at the very moment they were reprobating the test laws, discovered an intention of forming associations to impose a test on members of that house : he also vindicated the necessity of a permanent church establishment for the good of the state ; showing, at the same time, that such an institution could not exist, if toleration were extended to equality of privileges. He was seconded in his opposition to the bill by the strenuous exertions of Mr. Burke, who alarmed the house by reading extracts from dissenting authors, exhibiting great acrimony and virulence against the church : he also adjured them to let the events which had taken place in France, and the sudden downfall of the church in that kingdom, awaken their zeal for the preservation of our own admirable establishment.

These arguments had the desired effect ; for at the division, the bill was thrown out by 294 votes against 105, being an increase from a majority of twenty in the last session, to 189 in the present. This result proceeded not so much from hostility to the measure itself, abstractedly considered, as to the time when it was brought forward, and to the means which its advocates put in practice to ensure success. In this point of view, the proceedings of the dissenters were remarkably injudicious : their ardor to obtain their object served only to magnify it in the eyes of their opponents : many of their publications were



highly censurable; and the example of revolutionary France was brought forward in a manner calculated to alienate friends from their cause.

The final emancipation of the dissenters was now evidently deferred to a distant period: the times of war and tumult, near at hand, were unfavorable to the admission, or even to the discussion, of their claims; while it would probably require years of peace and tranquillity to dispel the prejudices which time had hallowed, and peculiar events contributed to nourish. Had these claims been now conceded, their influence and power as a body would probably have sunk, and the greater part of them have merged in the establishment; but it seems as if they were destined to act a more important part in the state. Prohibitions, which they called persecution, kept the body firmly together: the laxity of church discipline during the latter part of the last and the beginning of this century, the scandalous exercise of ecclesiastical patronage, and the neglect in providing means of accommodation or instruction for increasing numbers of the establishment in large towns, rapidly augmented the ranks of its opponents; and as these latter partook of the prosperity of the country, and entered eagerly into the scheme of general education, they constantly increased in power and influence, until they were enabled, not only to liberate themselves from the obnoxious acts, but to forward that great change in the British constitution, which could scarcely have been carried without their co-operation.

Two days after the above-mentioned decision, Mr. Flood, the celebrated Irish orator, moved to bring in a bill for a definite reform in parliament; proposing to add 100 members to the present house of commons, in a proportionate ratio to the population of each county, to be elected by resident householders. In prefacing this motion, he ventured to utter a bold truth; relying on the virtue of the house to pardon him, when he stated, that they were not the adequate representatives of the people: that they were the legal representatives, he would not deny; nay, he would go farther, and say, that they were a highly useful and honorable council; a council, which, in any other European government, would be a vast acquisition; but, to the honor of the British constitution, we were intitled to something better. 'Representation,' he said, 'was the great arcanum and wise mystery of our government, by which it excelled all the states of antiquity. Now in what did representation consist? In this; that as by the general law of political society, the majority was to decide for the whole; the



representative must be chosen by a body of constituents who were themselves a clear majority of the people. He admitted that property to a certain degree was a necessary requisite to the elective power; that is to say, that franchise ought not to go beyond property, but at the same time it ought to be extended farther than at present. By the existing system these principles were grossly violated. The freeholders, who originally included the whole property of the kingdom, now constituted only a small part of it: what was worse, the majority of the representatives, who decided for the whole, and acted for eight millions of people, were chosen by a number of electors not exceeding six or eight thousand. A new body of constituents was, therefore, wanting; and in their appointment two things were to be considered: one, that they should be numerous enough, because numbers were necessary to the spirit of liberty; the other, that they should have a competent share of property, because property was conducive to the spirit of order. But he was told this was not the time for a reform: and why? because there were disturbances in France. It was for want of a timely and temperate reform, that these evils had fallen on France. He was no friend to revolutions; because they were an evil: he was a friend to timely reform, which rendered revolutions unnecessary. Those who opposed such a reform, might be enemies to revolution in their hearts, but were friends to it by their folly: let the representative be chosen, as he ought to be, by the people, and continue to walk worthy of that choice; then Britain would have nothing to dread from the example of France.'

This motion, simple and eligible as it appeared, was vehemently opposed by Mr. Windham, one of the most zealous disciples of Burke: his arguments were drawn principally from the danger of reforming such an institution at such a time, which would be like repairing a house during the hurricane season. In this opinion he had the concurrence of Mr. Pitt, who declared, 'that if the motion before them were the precise resolution which he himself had formerly proposed, he should now vote against it from a thorough conviction of its impropriety: at a more seasonable opportunity, however, he would certainly again submit his ideas on the subject to the consideration of the house.' Mr. Fox dissented intirely from Mr. Windham's notions; and affirmed, in opposition to his metaphorical argument, 'that no season could be more proper for the commencement of repairs, than when a hurricane was near, and ready to burst forth.' The general sentiment ap-



peared so adverse to the motion, that Mr. Flood withdrew it without dividing the house. These were the only great political questions which engaged the attention of the commons this season; and with them they rested, without extending to the peers: subjects of revenue occupied the chief attention of parliament during the remainder of the session. In April, Mr. Pitt opened his scheme of finance for the year; and after stating the prosperous condition of the country to prove and illustrate his position, he recapitulated the extraordinary expenses defrayed in 1789, in addition to the regular establishment: notwithstanding these unforeseen demands, though we had borrowed only one million, we had paid off six millions of debt: the increase of revenue, which had thus liquidated so many and great charges, originated in two permanent causes; the suppression of smuggling, and the increase of commerce. The supplies for the army, navy, and ordnance were nearly the same as in last year, and no new taxes were imposed.

Mr. Dundas about the same time presented an account of the financial state of India, by which it appeared that the revenue of that country considerably exceeded the product of the preceding year, and that the increase was likely to be permanent. The system of justice and moderation adopted since the territorial possessions were subjected to the control of the British government, had produced the most advantageous results both to the natives and to this country; the landed revenues, being more willingly paid, were collected with less difficulty; fostered by a humane and equitable administration, the internal commerce of our settlements had greatly increased; and the rigid faith observed with the natives had put an end to those formidable conspiracies, which diminished territorial improvement while they created enormous expenses. Prosperity, arising from a general scheme of policy so wise and liberal, must rapidly increase; so that in a few years the colony would be enabled to pay off arrears, and British India would exhibit a greater increase in commerce, manufactures, and every species of wealth, than any other part of Hindostan. In the present state of things we had no danger to fear from any European nation: Holland was our ally; and France was scarcely in a situation to disturb us in our foreign possessions: we had, indeed, one enemy in the country; but without European auxiliaries, and unsupported by the other native powers, Tippoo Saib could never become formidable to the British empire.

The house voted several sums as a recompense for services, or indemnification for losses in the cause of the public. An



annuity of £1000 per annum was granted to Dr. Willis, who, under Providence, had been so instrumental in restoring their beloved sovereign to his people; and the speaker's salary was advanced from £3000 to £6000. In a committee on American claims, Mr. Pitt represented to the house the peculiar losses sustained by the family of Penn, and proposed a perpetual grant to them of £4000 per annum out of the consolidated fund. Mr. Wilberforce moved for the consideration of the slave trade; but most of the time allotted to that subject was occupied in the hearing of evidence; so that no bill was introduced.

The trial of Mr. Hastings made but little progress during this session; and the circumstances which delayed it were detailed by Mr. Burke. The managers had proposed in the written evidence to confine the recital of letters and papers to such extracts as related to the charges; but the counsel for Mr. Hastings insisted on reading the whole; and the lords had agreed that no partial quotation from any document could be received as evidence, but that either the whole contents, or no part, should be adduced: of this resolution Mr. Burke complained, as an obstacle to the prosecution; declaring at the same time that it was the duty of the house and its appointed managers, to persevere in the trial without regarding any hindrances; and having moved two resolutions to that effect, they were both carried. Mr. Hastings continued to possess a zealous and devoted advocate in major Scott, who employed not only his voice, but his pen in the cause: one of his productions was voted a gross libel on the house of commons, and it was agreed that the author should be censured in his place. Mr. Burke declared that not less than £20,000 had been expended in such libels, through the agency of major Scott, the general libeller of the house.

On the fifth of May, parliament was surprised by a message from his majesty, intimating an apprehension, that the peace, which had already contributed so much to the prosperity of Great Britain, might be broken. The following were the circumstances in which this message originated: captain Cook, in his last voyage, had touched at Nootka, or Prince William's Sound, where his crew purchased some valuable furs, which they disposed of to great advantage in China; and in consequence of the recommendation of captain King, who published the last volume of 'Cook's Voyages,' some mercantile adventurers from the East Indies, with the consent of the governor-general, undertook to supply the Chinese with furs from those



regions; for which purpose they fitted out two small vessels. This trade proved so advantageous, that in 1788 the adventurers resolved to form a permanent settlement; which was augmented in the following year, land being purchased from the natives; and about seventy Chinese, with several artificers, were added to the establishment. In May, two Spanish ships of war arrived in the Sound, seized an English vessel, and sent the crew prisoners to a Spanish port: they then took possession of the settlement, removed the British flag, and declared that all the lands between Cape Horn and the sixtieth degree of north latitude on the western coast of America, were the indisputable property of his catholic majesty: another vessel was subsequently captured; the cargoes of both were sold, and the crews cast into prison.

These incidents were notified to the British court by the Spanish ambassador himself, who at the same time expressed his master's desire that measures might be adopted to prevent British subjects from frequenting those coasts: he also complained of the fisheries carried on by the English in the adjoining seas, as contrary to the rights of the Spanish crown. Notifications and remonstrances like these were met by a demand of satisfaction for the insults offered to the British nation, and reparation to the individuals who had been injured in property and person: intelligence also having been received that armaments were fitting out in the Spanish ports, his Britannic majesty judged it right to prepare on his side for supporting the rights and interests of his kingdom with vigor and effect.

These circumstances being stated in the king's message, his majesty requested his faithful commons to enable him to make such augmentation of his forces as necessity seemed to require; expressing at the same time an earnest wish that the wisdom and equity of his catholic majesty might offer that satisfaction which was unquestionably due, so as to prevent all future interruption of the harmony and friendship which subsisted between the two nations.

The message being taken into consideration, Mr. Pitt declared that he was too well assured of the public spirit of the house, to conceive that any difference of opinion could arise regarding the measures to be adopted. The court of Madrid had not only seized our ships and men, where we had an incontrovertible right of trading, and where no nation possessed any exclusive claim; but had refused all restitution and satisfaction for the injury. The destruction of our valuable fisheries in the southern ocean was aimed at, as well as the



annihilation of a profitable commerce, which we were beginning to carry on with unfrequented parts of the globe. Much, therefore, as we might desire peace, we ought to be prepared for war, if Spain continued to refuse satisfaction for her aggression, and to assert claims inconsistent with the rights of independent navigators: he therefore moved an address corresponding to the message.

On a subject which thus involved the interests and the honor of the nation, there was but one sentiment in both houses; and in the commons, Mr. Fox was the foremost to declare his intire concurrence with the minister; though he blamed him for having laid before them so flattering a prospect of the continuance of peace, when the principal grounds of his majesty's message were known from the Spanish ambassador. In reply to this animadversion, it was stated, that government was not at that time aware of the extent of Spanish claims, or of the preparations carried on in Spanish ports; accordingly, a unanimous address was presented to his majesty by parliament, assuring him of their determination to afford him the most zealous and effectual support in maintaining the dignity of his crown and the essential interests of his dominions: this was followed by a vote of credit for £1,000,000, for the purpose of carrying into effect the warlike preparations that might be necessary. Motions made in both houses for the production of papers that might illustrate the grounds of the dispute, were resisted, on an established rule of policy, prohibiting all documents relating to a negociation with a foreign power from being produced, while such negociation is pending.

On the tenth of June his majesty closed the session with a speech, in which he acquainted the two houses that he had as yet received no satisfactory answer from the court of Madrid, and was therefore under the necessity of proceeding in preparations for war: he also announced his intention of dissolving the present parliament; at the same time acknowledging their affectionate and unshaken loyalty to his person, their uniform and zealous regard for the true principles of our invaluable constitution, and their unremitting attention to the happiness and prosperity of the country. In a concise but comprehensive summary, his majesty enumerated the salutary effects of their counsels; and at the conclusion emphatically added; 'the loyalty and public spirit, the industry and enterprise of my subjects, have well seconded your exertions: on their sense of the advantages which they at



present experience, and their uniform attachment to my person and government, I rely for the continuance of that harmony and confidence, which must at all times afford the surest means of meeting the exigences of war, or of cultivating with increasing benefit the blessings of peace.' Next day parliament was dissolved by proclamation.

It being the intention of the British government to avoid hostilities unless absolutely necessary, Mr. Fitzherbert was despatched to Madrid with full powers to settle all disputes between the two nations. The grounds of claim were set forth officially by Spain to all the European courts, in a document dated June 4, 1790; and were more specifically detailed to the English ambassador. In these statements, she claimed a prescriptive right to the exclusive navigation, commerce, and property of South America and the Spanish West Indies, according to treaties acknowledged by England, especially that of Utrecht, which recognised the rights of the Spanish monarchy to their South American and West Indian dominions, as they existed in the reign of Charles II. On the part of England, it was answered, that we were still ready to adhere to that recognition; but the admission by no means proved that Nootka-sound made part of those dominions: whatever is common, belongs to the first occupier; and right being only co-extensive with occupancy, any nation may fairly appropriate to itself what it can acquire without trespassing on the previous appropriations of others: the Spaniards, not having established their claim to the territory in question by occupancy or labor, could prove no right to an exclusive property in it; the seizure therefore of British vessels and effects, was an injury and an insult, which demanded restitution and satisfaction. This language was at first resented as haughty and menacing by the Spanish court, which attempted to interest that of France in its behalf; and this latter was willing enough to support the Bourbon compact, but had lost the power: the French nation was at this time adverse to a war with England; and as the fleets of Spain were unable to cope with those of Great Britain, she began to intermingle offers of concession with her previous declarations of pacific intentions; and on the twenty-fourth of July issued a declaration, testifying her willingness to comply fully with the demands of his Britannic majesty: this being accepted by Mr. Fitzherbert, a convention between the two courts was signed on the twenty-eighth of October, by which the settlement of Nootka-sound was restored; and full liberty



of trade to all the north-west coasts of America, as well as of navigation in the Southern Pacific, and of fishery within ten miles of the coast, was confirmed to Great Britain; all illicit commerce with the Spanish settlements being prohibited: both nations were equally restricted from attempting to form any settlement nearer to Cape Horn than the most southerly plantations already established by Spain: it was also agreed, that in case of any future complaint, no violence should be committed, but recourse had to an amicable adjustment between the respective courts. This convention, as well as the manner in which the minister obtained satisfaction for the country without involving it in war, was generally applauded, though the sum which Great Britain expended in warlike preparations amounted to £3,000,000. On the third of December, however, when the new parliament had assembled, and a copy of the convention was laid before the two houses, its terms were not ratified with unanimous consent: Mr. Grey, in the commons, moved for the production of papers, without which it was impossible to decide whether we might not have gained all our boasted advantages at a much less expense; and whether the late disputes were owing to the ambition and unjust claims of Spain, or to the rashness, presumption, and ignorance of his majesty's ministers. Mr. Fox affirmed that the treaty was one of concessions rather than of acquisitions; that we had given up what was of infinite value to Spain, and retained what would be of little advantage to ourselves. In the house of lords, the convention was strongly reprobated by the marquis of Lansdowne, who took an extensive view of European politics from the year 1782; showing that from the period of the king of Prussia's death in 1786, we had changed our policy, and commenced a new system, by which we had failed in securing France, or Spain, or any other power. In this last convention, he observed, the fishery was defined to our disadvantage. As to the right of trading, that was asserted even in the time of Elizabeth, and in the treaty of 1670; and was afterwards acknowledged in 1749: but this proceeding at Nootka-sound endangered all the advantages of our commercial treaty with Spain: we were doing the work of other nations, and of North America in particular.

Whatever truth there may have been in these observations of his lordship, relative to other nations enjoying the exclusive benefits of the late armament, England alone was called on to defray its expense; and this Mr. Pitt proposed to meet by



temporary taxes, with the assistance of £500,000, which he contemplated taking from the unclaimed dividends at the Bank of England, estimated at about £660,000: this proposition, however, excited so much alarm in the great chartered companies, as well as the mercantile world in general, that the minister thought proper to abandon it; consenting to accept, by way of compromise, a loan of £500,000 from the Bank without interest, so long as a floating balance to that amount should remain in the hands of its cashier. The amount of the national debt at this time was £542,000,000 funded, and £42,000,000 unfunded.

While Great Britain was successfully employed in securing for herself the blessings of peace, she was anxious also that they should be extended to other nations. In conjunction with Prussia, Holland, Sweden, Turkey, and Poland, she had already formed a defensive union against the ambitious projects of the two imperial courts; and the principal object of this confederacy was to save the Ottoman empire from ruin, while the associates afforded to each other reciprocal protection: nor was it a much less essential part of British policy to free Poland from its subjection to the czarina, and draw towards English ports the numerous productions of that fertile and extensive country. As negotiation was the first purpose of the powers not actually engaged in hostilities, overtures were made for a congress; which, though rejected by Russia, was, after some difficulty, accepted by Austria, whose throne was occupied by Leopold, grand duke of Tuscany, who had lately succeeded his brother Joseph. This prince, though he did not possess superior talents, was, by his steadiness, prudence, and pacific disposition, well qualified to remedy the evils which had proceeded from the violence and caprice of his predecessor. At Reichenbach, where the proposed congress met, the habitual prepossessions of two great rival statesmen, Kaunitz and Hertzberg, were strongly exhibited: the former, still directing his aim to the aggrandisement of the house of Austria, was averse to peace, from the hopes which he entertained of acquiring advantages from the Russian alliance, and the prosecution of the Turkish war; the latter, following the policy of his late master Frederic the Great, without adverting to the change of circumstances, desired to attack Austria in her weak and exhausted state, to aid the revolt of the Low Countries, prevent the elevation of Leopold to the imperial throne, and take possession of the rest of Silesia. The wiser and more liberal policy of Great Britain, however, being



ably advocated by Mr. Ewart, our ambassador to the court of Berlin, so strongly inculcated the necessity of sacrificing hereditary enmity to permanent and comprehensive interests, that the principals in this negociation assented to his arguments; and on the twenty-seventh of July a convention was concluded. The king of Hungary agreed to open a negociation for peace, on the basis of reciprocal restitution, accepting the members of the defensive alliance as umpires: the empress was to be invited to accede to these conditions; and in case of her refusal, Leopold was to observe a strict neutrality; while Prussia engaged to co-operate with the maritime powers in restoring the Netherlands to Austria, on condition that their ancient constitution, rights, and privileges were restored.

The war between the czarina and the sultan was carried on languidly so long as Catharine's attention was directed to the congress in Silesia, and to some schemes of policy in other quarters: one of these was to detach the Greek subjects from their obedience to the Porte, in furtherance of her grand project of driving the Turks from Europe, and raising her grandson to the imperial throne of Constantine. By her encouragement and pecuniary assistance a rebellion was fomented in Albania, and an extensive plan arranged by the Greeks for emancipating themselves from the Ottoman yoke: a memorial, offering the sovereignty of Greece to the Russian prince, was laid before the empress, and graciously received; but ere the plan could be matured, Russia was induced, if not to relinquish, at least to postpone her attempts on Turkey. It was late in the autumn, before her army, under prince Potemkin, was put in motion; but it was the result of policy, to wait till the Asiatic troops separated from the rest of the Ottoman forces: then operations commenced in earnest; and the end of the year witnessed the capture of Ismail by Suwarrow, where 24,000 Turkish soldiers perished; 7000 of the inhabitants, men, women, and children, were massacred; and the slain on the side of the conquerors exceeded 10,000 men.

The king of Sweden opened the campaign against Russia early this year, and penetrated into the country, till he arrived within 100 miles of St. Petersburg. Catharine, alarmed at this approach of her enemies, sent 10,000 troops to obstruct their progress, who attacked the Swedish lines, but were defeated with a loss of 2000 men: Gustavus still advanced; while his fleet, under the duke of Sudermania, sailed up the gulf of Finland, penetrated into the harbor of Revel, and had



nearly succeeded in destroying the great naval arsenal, with all the ships and magazines, when it was dispersed by a violent storm : its commander, being afterwards attacked by two Russian squadrons in front and rear, extricated himself from the danger with great courage and skill, and joined his royal brother off Wiburg : here they were again enclosed by superior forces on land and sea ; but effected their escape by forcing their way through the enemy, with great loss both of ships and men. The genius of Gustavus having enabled him to recruit his shattered forces, he took the command of his own squadron ; and having encountered a large Russian fleet, gained a decisive victory, in which the enemy lost more than 4000 men slain, and as many in prisoners. This defeat, and the prowess of her antagonist, alarmed the czarina : being abandoned by Austria, and threatened both by England and Prussia, she now entered into negociation with the Swedish monarch ; who, relying on the defensive alliance to repress the ambitious projects of the empress, concluded an armistice with her, which, before the end of August, ripened into a peace.

Freed from a Turkish war, Leopold had leisure to turn his attention to the affairs of the Low Countries. The Flemings had begun their resistance to Joseph on principles totally different from those which prevailed in France ; but their vicinity to that country, and a closer intercourse between the two nations, led to the introduction of French doctrines, which other causes contributed to disseminate. Since their revolt, the States-General had exercised the sovereign authority ; but this body being chiefly composed of nobles and clergy, the inequality was soon remarked, and reprobated by the members of the third estate, who had either imbibed democratical notions, or were ambitious of aggrandising themselves by the elevation of the commons. Early in the present year, a number of individuals, professing such sentiments, formed themselves into an association, which they denominated a patriotic assembly : after passing various resolutions of subordinate reform, they framed a general system of revolution, and published an address to the States, in the name of the people, reprobating their permanent exercise of the sovereign authority, as an aristocratical despotism ; and demanding a legitimate constitution, formed and ratified by the commons. These principles and demands were so offensive to the two higher orders, that they endeavored to silence them by promoting counter-addresses, and by subjecting the press to the



same restrictions as those which had been imposed by imperial authority. These attempts to restrain the actions, and control the sentiments of the people, gave great dissatisfaction to those who wished for a larger portion of democracy in the constitution: two distinct parties were formed in the state; the one composed of the nobles and clergy, the other of the commons, with all that were inimical to the privileged orders. The dissensions which followed this state of affairs gave an opportunity of interference to Leopold, who sent a memorial to the Netherlanders, in which he expressed sincere regret for the despotic proceedings of the Austrian government, and declared his anxiety to redress all real grievances; at the same time vindicating his undoubted claim to the sovereignty, and announcing his resolution to maintain it: this address, and the situation of Belgian affairs, revived the spirits of the loyalists, or adherents of the house of Austria; while many moderate men began to compare the present miserable condition of the country, with the tranquillity and happiness it enjoyed under Maria Theresa. If the States-General should govern, they must groan under a coalition of ambitious priests and nobles; if a republic on democratic principles should be formed, the consequence would be anarchy, with its attendant evils, terminating in the despotism of a single ruler. By degrees, great numbers of the populace embraced these opinions, and the party acquired a very imposing force. Leopold, being now raised to the imperial throne, issued a manifesto, engaging himself, under an inaugural oath, and the guarantee of Great Britain, Prussia, and the United Provinces, to govern the Belgic Netherlands wholly according to the constitution that was in force under Maria Theresa; he also offered an amnesty to all who should return to their duty before the first of November. The mediating powers notified to the Belgian states their approval of these terms; but it was found impossible to bring that body to relinquish their authority, until the Austrian troops entered the territory: various engagements, uniformly unsuccessful, soon indicated to them the inutility of resistance: the allied powers represented to them the cruelty of continuing a hopeless warfare; the Austrian troops pressed on; and the people generally acknowledged the heir of their ancient rulers. The leading members of the opposing party, apprehending the resentment of the emperor, now took to flight: the Austrians used their success with a wise moderation; life and property were protected; and in a convention, guarantied by the defensive alliance, and executed



on the tenth of December, the constitution of Maria Theresa, augmented by some additional rights and privileges, was restored to the Belgic provinces.

In Paris, the national assembly zealously pursued its legislative labors; but, unfortunately, as must always be the case when such a task is committed to men of inexperience and passion, contingent benefits were vastly overbalanced by the prevailing evils: indeed, no remedies, applied to partial grievances, can ever compensate for the violation of great fundamental principles in justice and legislation; for the greater evil will soon swallow up the lesser good. Thus, though the French assembly remodelled the courts of judicature, and issued an order, that the estates of protestants, who fled from the country on the iniquitous repeal of the edict of Nantz, should be restored; yet the confiscation of ecclesiastical property, by this same assembly, soon led to the overthrow of all property whatever; while the very invention of the guillotine showed what a summary process of trial had succeeded to the ancient usages of the law. Again, though the most vexatious remnants of feudal tyranny were banished with the *corvée* and the odious game-laws; yet, in the abolition of all titles and hereditary nobility, that powerful and conservative influence which arises from a high-minded aristocracy, was wholly lost to the state:<sup>3</sup> the kingly title soon followed those of the nobles; and when the democratic spirit was set free from all its confining bonds, the kingdom became deluged in blood.

The reforms which had already taken place satisfied La Fayette and his party, which represented the middle classes, and formed a majority in the assembly: but the bridle had been taken from the mouth of the fiery steed, and what was to stop his course? The nation was in a state of fermentation; all ties of authority were loosened; the soldiery became mutinous and turbulent; numerous emigrations took place; the financial resources were paralysed; and Neckar, who had lost all his popularity, fled from a country which he had contributed to ruin: in the mean time, the demagogues, who, within the precincts of the assembly, had not sufficient scope for developing their sentiments or forwarding their plans, succeeded in becoming masters of a club, established at first by the more moderate friends of liberty; which, after the

<sup>3</sup> So sensible of the utility of this influence was Napoleon, that he soon filled up the void with titles of his own creation, and those of the emigrants whom he recalled.



removal of the court to Paris, had installed itself in the convent of the Jacobins. From this connexion, as violence gained ground, La Fayette and others seceded, to form a separate association; after which, Barnave and the two Lameths assumed the head of the jacobins; men who detested both La Fayette and Mirabeau, being impelled in their course by the principles of envy, and the ambition of pre-eminence: they coquetted with the genuine party of the populace, rather than embraced it; and were supported solely by their talents.

Mirabeau was actuated by more independent opinions: at the beginning of the present year, his ardor for revolution began to cool; and he could not but disapprove of a constitution which he himself had helped to form: he thought it far too democratic for a monarchy; and, knowing the value of that form of government, he declared, that 'he would rather live in Constantinople than in France, if laws could be made without the sanction of the king.' Hence it was that he leagued secretly with the fallen court; laboring to raise it by his popularity, and to recover for the crown a portion of strength necessary for its existence: La Fayette, on the contrary, held firm to the constitution now established; to observe which, the king swore, on the altar of the country, at the celebrated fête on the fourteenth of July, the anniversary of the destruction of the Bastile; where more than 500,000 Frenchmen met and took on themselves a similar obligation.

Some notion of the extent to which admiration of French proceedings was carried in England, may be formed from the circumstance, that on the day of this Parisian solemnity, upwards of 600 gentlemen assembled to celebrate the event which it commemorated: their chairman was earl Stanhope, who acted as president of the Revolution Society, established in London; and which, after extending its ramifications through this kingdom, was in active correspondence, not only with the national assembly, but with innumerable societies in all parts of France, instituted for the promotion of revolutionary principles.<sup>4</sup> The associates, among whom were members of all the professions, many second-rate literary men, and numerous dissenters, could lay claim generally to no practical acquaintance with politics, or the working of governments: however

<sup>4</sup> See a publication intitled 'Correspondence of the Revolution Society in London with the National Assembly, and with various Societies of the Friends of Liberty in France and England.' London, 1792.



deep they might be in the knowlege of books, or ingenious in speculative theories, they knew nothing of human nature in great and untried emergences: even those who had good intentions, would have committed the grossest errors if they had found an opportunity of reducing them to practice; while there were many, whose views on the constitution of their country were more than questionable.

Against this, and similar associations, Mr. Burke bitterly inveighed in his grand work,<sup>5</sup> which made its appearance toward the end of this year, and was instantly assailed with innumerable pamphlets dictated by unprecedented virulence; every epithet of abuse in the language being applied to it, and every action or expression of the author, which could be tortured into a sinister meaning, being raked up to convict him of inconsistency. Among the most noted of these productions, was 'The Rights of Man,' by Thomas Paine, written in a style calculated to impose on ordinary understandings; though its purpose was, by setting the baser at war with the better passions of our nature, to pull down superior rank, talents, and distinction, to a level with the lowest. Mr. Burke, however, was consoled, not only by testimonies of approbation which he received from the highest characters in the realm, but by the applause of almost all the sovereigns of Europe, over which it quickly spread by means of a French translation: but his chief satisfaction arose from disclosing to his countrymen an evil which had been making a rapid, though silent progress, in their ranks; for neither the government, nor the people at large, had any notion that French principles were so widely diffused, or had procured so many converts.

Among the most ardent admirers of Mr. Burke's lofty appeal to loyalty, was George III., who distributed many copies of it among his friends, declaring that it was a book which 'every gentleman ought to read:' nor can we be surprised at the approbation thus manifested by his majesty towards a work, which sounded the knell of the old whig confederacy. Some of the party yielded at once to the eloquence of this extraordinary publication; others drew off, as they saw the development of those principles, against which Mr. Burke had directed the powerful artillery of his genius; so that the appellations of whig and tory, which had already deviated considerably from their original import, came to be popularly applied in a sense still more different: by the

<sup>5</sup> 'Reflections on the Revolution,' &c.



former were now understood the favorers of those democratic principles which prevailed in France; men who professed to act as friends of the people, and were equally hostile to the influence of the aristocracy and to that of the crown: by the latter, those who were alarmed at the progress of the French revolution; and who were ready to resist it by all possible means, including even actual war.

Whilst a false philanthropy was endeavoring to disturb mankind in Europe by unsettling the principles of moral conduct, intelligence arrived from Asia of the death of the most active and indefatigable among the friends of the human race. The celebrated Howard, who, to use the words of Mr. Burke, 'had visited all Europe, not to survey its sumptuous palaces or stately temples; not to take measurements of the remains of ancient grandeur, or to form a scale of the curiosities of modern art; not to collect medals, or to collate manuscripts; but to dive into the depths of dungeons, and plunge into the infection of hospitals; to survey the mansions of sorrow and pain; to take the gauge and dimensions of misery, depression, and contempt; to remember the forgotten, attend to the neglected, and visit the forsaken; to compare and collate the distresses of all men in all climes;'—this incomparable traveller finished his grand 'voyage of discovery,' his 'circumnavigation of charity,' at Cherson in the Crimea; where he was buried in the garden of a French gentleman, who administered to him the last offices of disinterested friendship.



## CHAP. XXXIV.

## GEORGE III. (CONTINUED.)—1791.

Proceedings in the trial of Mr. Hastings—Dispute with Russia—Slave-trade abolition bill—Bill for the regulation of Canada—Leads to an irreconcilable quarrel between Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke—Consequences of this—Bill to amend the law on libels—Bill for relieving the protesting catholics from the operation of penal laws—Rejection of a bill to relieve members of the church of Scotland from the operation of the test act—Committee to inquire into the effects of imprisonment for debt—Statement of the finances—Prorogation of parliament—State of continental powers—Poland—France ; progress of the revolution—State of public opinion in Great Britain—Efforts of the sectarians—Dr. Priestley—Paine—Clubs and associations—Riots in Birmingham—Marriage of the duke of York with the princess royal of Prussia, and of prince Augustus with lady Augusta Murray.

THE house of commons having last session disposed of a question regarding the trial of Mr. Hastings, which involved one of its important rights ; Mr. Burke, on the fourteenth of February, brought forward a motion to shorten that trial, the long duration of which was considered to be a hardship on the accused. ‘Though,’ said the honorable gentleman, ‘it has pleased God, in the fixed and unalterable course of human affairs, to decree that injustice should be rapid, and justice slow ; yet I am determined, to the utmost of my power, to remove every just cause of complaint.’ His proposal, therefore, was, ‘that the managers be instructed to proceed to no other parts of the impeachment, except such as relate to contracts, pensions, and allowances ;’ and this was carried without a division : but the resolution of the commons, that an impeachment did not cease with the dissolution of parliament, was strongly contested in the house of lords. On a message from the commons, that they were ready to proceed with the evidence, a committee was appointed to search for precedents, which occasioned a suspension of the business till nearly the



end of the session: at length, the report being made, a motion of lord Porchester, on the sixteenth of May, 'that their lordships do now proceed with the trial,' was carried by a very decisive majority: the prosecution closed its evidence on the thirtieth; and the managers proposed an address to the king, praying him not to prorogue parliament until the trial was finished; but this was negatived. After the prosecution was concluded, Mr. Hastings addressed the court in a speech of great acuteness, force, and eloquence, exhibiting his view of the result; and, having contrasted the situation in which he found our Eastern possessions with that in which he left them, he appealed to his accusers in the following energetic peroration:—

'To the commons of England, in whose name I am arraigned for desolating the provinces of India, I dare to reply, that they are, and their representatives persist in telling them so, the most flourishing of all the states of India: it was I who made them so: the value of what others acquired, I enlarged; giving shape and consistency to the dominion which you hold there. I preserved it: I sent forth its armies, with an effectual but economical hand, through unknown and hostile regions, to the support of your other possessions; to the retrieval of one from dishonor and degradation, and of another from utter loss and subjection: I maintained the wars which were of your formation, or that of others, not of mine: I won one member of the great Indian confederacy from it by an act of seasonable restitution; with another I maintained a secret intercourse, and converted him into a friend; a third I drew off by diversion and negociation, and employed him as the instrument of peace: I gave you all; and you have rewarded me with confiscation, disgrace, and a life of impeachment.' After this plea of general merit, in extenuation of specific charges, the defence of the accused was postponed, by direction of the court, till the following session.

When the dispute with Spain was settled, another important subject of foreign politics engaged the attention of parliament. Mr. Pitt, with a penetration not inferior to that of his illustrious father, foresaw the future augmentation of the colossal empire of the north, and the consequent danger arising from it to the general interests of Europe. At the congress of Reichenbach, the defensive alliance had proposed to Russia that she should accede to the peace which they were negotiating with Austria, and that all conquests should be restored: but Catharine constantly refused to admit of any



interference between her and Turkey. Being, however, deprived of her ally, she saw the impracticability of subjugating that power for the present; and accordingly offered to restore all her acquisitions, except the city and dependences of Oczakow, a very important place, which commands the mouth of the Dnieper, at a distance of less than 200 miles from the Turkish capital. Finding pacific negotiations unavailing, the defensive alliance projected a more effectual interference; and his Britannic majesty, on the twenty-fourth of March, sent a message to parliament, demanding an augmentation of his naval force. On this occasion, Mr. Fox and other members of opposition strongly deprecated the latitude of construction given to defensive alliances in general, as well as any hostile interference on our part, for the purpose of seconding the ambitious policy of Prussia, in whose intrigues and projects we had lately become too much involved. 'What injury,' it was asked, 'had we received from Russia? were all the advantages of our immense trade with that empire to be sacrificed for the sake of a Turkish fortress? and could wisdom or policy justify Great Britain in going to war to preserve a barbarian power, which, for the sake of religion, humanity, and civilisation, ought to be utterly extirpated?'

Ministers, on the other hand, argued, that the aggrandisement of Russia and the depression of Turkey, would injure both our commercial and political interests; and the possession of Oczakow in particular would facilitate the acquisition, not only of Constantinople, but of Alexandria and Lower Egypt: the opposition now made to the encroachment of Russia tallied with our general policy in continental interference;—that of maintaining the balance of power.

Several resolutions were moved against the armament, which, however, were rejected; although the eloquence of Fox, coinciding with the immediate interests of mercantile men, rendered the people in general inimical to the notion of a Russian war; and ministers, feeling a due and constitutional respect for the popular voice, forbore to press their measures. But although England was thus prevented from compelling Russia to restore the key of Turkey, yet the energy of the defensive alliance induced the empress to relinquish her other acquisitions made during the war.

The evidence on the slave trade being closed, Mr. Wilberforce now brought forward his long-expected motion to prevent the farther importation of negroes into the British plantations; which he introduced with a copious and convincing display of



arguments in its favor, grounded on the principles of justice, humanity, and christianity. On this question, Pitt and Fox took the same side, in support of the abolition; but mercantile illiberality prevailed for the continuance of the trade; the planters in the West Indies contending that they could not cultivate the islands without frequent additions to the old stock of negroes: much stress was also laid on the effects which the abolition would have on our navy; the authority of lord Rodney being brought forward, and confirmed by that of other eminent commanders; who had declared that the power of obtaining from Guinea ships a numerous body of men inured to the climate, if there should be a necessity to send a fleet to the West Indies at the commencement of a war, was a consideration of great moment. The motion was accordingly negatived by a majority of seventy-five votes; but the advocates of humanity completed at this time the establishment of the Sierra Leone company, by which they proposed to introduce free labor and christianity into Africa: a bill for this purpose was introduced by Mr. Henry Thornton, which passed through both houses without opposition.

The ministry had long contemplated an improvement in the government of Canada; and a bill was now framed, to divide it into two provinces, Upper and Lower, and to establish distinct legislatures; the division being meant to separate the parts which were chiefly inhabited by French Canadians from more recent settlers. For each province there was to be a legislative council, either hereditary, or for life, at the option of his majesty; with a provincial assembly, to be chosen by freeholders for seven years, and to be assembled at least once a year: the governor, representing the sovereign, might refuse his sanction to any proposal of a law, until the final determination of Great Britain should be known: the British government also gave up the right of taxation, asserting only that of regulating external commerce. This bill passed through both houses without any material alterations; though Mr. Fox considered it as not sufficiently agreeing with those principles of liberty, which seemed to be now hastening into general adoption: he also took occasion, when Mr. Burke was not present, of censuring some of the principal doctrines in that gentleman's late publications; nor did he hesitate to question the utility of hereditary power and titles, concluding with a sneer at 'ribbons red and blue.'<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See Prior's Life of Burke, vol. ii. p. 138.



Mr. Burke naturally considered this as an indirect challenge to him by his old associate; and when the bill was committed on the sixteenth of May, he rose to state his sentiments in reply: in adverting, however, to the French constitution by name, and the unhappy scenes with which it was connected, he was loudly and frequently called to order from the opposition benches; the other side of the house as vehemently maintained that he was in order; while the shouts and cries of the contending parties presented a scene only to be paralleled in the political assemblies of a neighboring country. At length, an express vote of censure against him for noticing the affairs of France was moved by lord Sheffield, and seconded by Mr. Fox: but Mr. Pitt, after urging the point of order in his favor, declared that he was grateful to the right honorable gentleman for the manly struggle made by him against French principles; that his views should receive support from him whenever the danger approached; and that his zeal and eloquence in such a cause intitled him to the gratitude of all his fellow subjects. Mr. Fox followed in a vehement address, alternately rebuking and complimenting Mr. Burke; and while he vindicated his own opinions, he questioned the consistency of his right honorable friend, whom he must ever esteem as his master, though he seemed to have forgotten the lessons of his own teaching.

There appeared to Mr. Burke such premeditation and want of generosity in this proceeding, that he rose to reply under the influence of strongly-excited feelings; though there is reason to suppose that he himself had for some time contemplated a renunciation of his connexion with Mr. Fox. After debating the main question, he complained of being treated with unaccountable harshness and malignity; of being personally attacked from a quarter where he least expected it, after an intimacy of more than twenty-two years; of his public sentiments and writings being garbled, and his confidential communications violated, to color an unjust charge: he added, that although at his time of life it might be indiscreet to provoke enemies or to lose friends; yet, if his steady adherence to the British constitution placed him in such a situation, he would risk all; and, as public duty taught him, with his last breath exclaim,—‘Fly from the French constitution.’ Mr. Fox here whispered, that there was no loss of friendship. ‘Yes,’ Mr. Burke said, ‘there was a loss of friendship; he knew the price of his conduct; he had done his duty at the price of his friend; their connexion was at an end.’ He concluded with



an eloquent apostrophe to the two great heads of their respective parties; exhorting them, whatever might be their other differences, steadfastly to guard the sacred edifice of the British constitution against innovation and new theories.

This public and pointed renunciation of long intimacy so affected Mr. Fox, that when he rose to reply, he was for some time unable to give utterance to his speech: at length, he found relief in tears; and then, after touching on the bill and French affairs, he burst into an eloquent appeal to his old and revered friend; to the remembrance of their past attachment; to their reciprocal affection, as dear, and almost as binding, as that between father and son. Seldom had there been heard in the house so pathetic and personal an address; yet even in this ebullition of sensibility, the pertinacity of the disputant contended so strongly with the feelings of the man, that he gave utterance to several bitter sarcasms, and reiterated some of his objectionable remarks: rejoinders on both sides followed, without the interposition of more amicable sentiments; and the connexion between these illustrious men was dissolved for ever.<sup>7</sup>

In the cause of this disunion there were circumstances which made it impossible for them ever again to act together: the dispute was not about a trivial affair, or speculative topic; but a great constitutional question, full of irritating matter, and involving in its consequences the very existence of the constitution; one which agitated all persons, and which met parliamentary statesmen at every turn in debate: besides, it was one, on which, from the first, each seemed to have staked his reputation for political wisdom against the other; 'Mr. Fox,' as it has been well observed, 'with all the enthusiasm of a generous, confiding, and unwary man; Mr. Burke, with the penetration of a profound philosopher, and the calculating sagacity of a practical statesman:'<sup>8</sup> in such a case, no reconciliation could have lasted long. This rupture excited at the time an extraordinary interest; and was followed by very important results: opposition instantly saw in it a considerable diminution of that consequence which they had hitherto enjoyed as a body in the state; and in their indignation against Mr. Burke, attributed his secession from their ranks either to splenetic ill-humor at the superior influence of Fox and Sheridan, and

<sup>7</sup> Mr. Burke, as it would appear, from principle, refused, even on his death-bed, to see Mr. Fox, though he declared 'that he was a man born to be loved.'

<sup>8</sup> Prior's Life of Burke, vol. ii. p. 145.



their rejection of his dictation ; or to a desire of joining that party, whose political power he saw now firmly established, and which was the distributer of those pecuniary rewards which afterwards fell to his lot.<sup>9</sup>

The next measure that engaged parliamentary attention was a bill for empowering juries to try the question of law as well as fact, in prosecutions for libel : a similar bill had been introduced in 1771 by Mr. Dowdeswell, but drawn up by Mr. Burke, who was the moving spirit of his party, and supported by him in a most eloquent and able speech : it then received, however, only a hollow support from his own friends, and was resisted by the ministry, among whom Mr. Fox spoke pointedly against it. At the present moment, however, that statesman sagaciously, though not very consistently, seized on this bill as a useful prop to his failing popularity : it was debated, not as a party question, but as a constitutional right ; and having obtained the vigorous support of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Erskine, it passed the house of commons with a large majority. In the upper house, lord Grenville supported the measure with no less zeal than lord Loughborough ; and the excellent lord Camden took the lead in its favor : it was, however, so strongly opposed as an innovation on the laws of the kingdom, now agitated with the dangerous maxims of its neighbors, that it was rejected by their lordships ; though in the following session it was again proposed, and passed into a law.

Another and a successful measure, supported by that illustrious trio, Pitt, Burke, and Fox, was Mr. Mitford's bill, to exempt protesting catholic dissenters from the operation of the penal statutes, on taking an oath conformable to their protest. A considerable body of these religionists had recently protested in express terms against doctrines long imputed to their body : they had denied the pope's temporal authority, and his right to excommunicate princes, or to absolve subjects from their oath of allegiance ; they also disavowed the lawfulness of breaking faith with heretics, and the power claimed by their priests,

<sup>9</sup> Having been taunted with a desertion of his principles ; and a paragraph having appeared in the Morning Chronicle, stating that the great body of the whig party had decided on the late dispute in favor of the purer tenets of Mr. Fox ; he published, towards the end of the summer, his celebrated pamphlet, styled 'An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs,' to show that his doctrines were in perfect coincidence with the allowed standard of correctness ; and that the French revolution was not a transient evil, but one productive of worse evils to come.



of exempting men from moral obligations. The principle of this bill was generally approved, and the bench of bishops displayed a liberal zeal in its favor: Dr. Horsley especially exerted his great abilities, not only in promoting its success, but in accommodating the words of the oath to the scruples of the catholics; who felt a strong reluctance to brand the memory of their ancestors with the charge of damnable heresy and impiety.

The church of Scotland, perceiving a disposition in parliament to relieve nonconformists, transmitted from the general assembly a petition, praying for a repeal of the test act, as far as it was applicable to that country. On the tenth of May, Sir Gilbert Elliot made a motion according to the tenor of this petition; the supporters of which endeavored, but ineffectually, to prove that the law, as it stood, was inconsistent with the articles of the union. The petition was discovered to have been sent principally at the instigation of English dissenters, who represented themselves to the church of Scotland as presbyterian brethren; and the bill founded on it was rejected by a large majority.

On the twelfth of May, Mr. Burke gave a proof that he was not indifferent to the principles of real liberty and reform, by his eloquent support of Mr. Grey's motion for a committee to inquire into the effects of imprisonment for debt; a blemish, as he observed, in our law, which produced all the effects of the most abject slavery: and the legislature of the present day, by passing the insolvent act, seems to have adopted the spirit of his ideas.

Previous to the introduction of his financial scheme, Mr. Pitt proposed the appointment of a committee to inquire what had been the amount of the income and expenditure of the country during the last five years, and what they might be expected to be in future; also what alterations had occurred in the amount of the national debt since the fifth of January, 1786. From their report to the house, on the tenth of May, it appeared that the average annual produce of the taxes for the last five years had exceeded the estimate by about £80,000; that all the expenses of the same period, amounting to £88,000,000, exclusive of the armament of 1790, for which a special provision was made, had been defrayed by the annual income and sums received from extraordinary resources, with the addition of £1,000,000 raised by a tontine, and of £187,000 by short annuities; that, according to the most correct estimate that could now be made, the annual income of



the country would in future exceed the expenses of a peace establishment by £62,000 ; that £3,822,003 had been applied to the reduction of the national debt, above the sums by which it had been increased ; and that the stocks purchased by the commissioners up to February 1, 1791, amounted to £6,772,350. This satisfactory report fully confirmed all the declarations made by Mr. Pitt respecting the financial state of the country ; and when he opened the budget, on the eighteenth of May, he was enabled to provide for the services of the year, which required £5,728,000, without a loan or any additional taxes.

Parliament was prorogued on the tenth of June ; when the king, in his speech, applauded the zeal with which the two houses had applied themselves to the different objects of deliberation, and expressed his satisfaction at the measures they had adopted.

The Indian war was carried on vigorously by lord Cornwallis ; but his plans for the subjugation of Tippoo Saib were not yet ripe for execution. Over the greater part of Europe, the rustling of that storm, which soon shook the ancient system to its centre, was beginning to be heard ; and the two antagonist principles of despotic power and democratic violence were already in action at its extremities. In Poland, the king and the states cordially agreed in a revolution now going on there ; because the leading men exerted their talents to rescue the country from anarchy, by instituting a wise and constitutional form of government : all the other princes of Europe seemed to approve the plan, except the autocratic empress, whose ambitious designs it was calculated to resist : she instantly commenced intrigues, which succeeded in crushing it ; and the nation soon fell back into its former state of degradation. In France, the reign of revolutionary clubs, those best allies of a democracy, was rising to a fearful height : associations of the moderate party and of the royalists were too inconsiderable to act as a counterpoise ; while the jacobins went on, increasing in number and violence, until they overturned the government, and sent forth those sanguinary despots, who established the reign of terror.

The increasing emigration of the nobles continued to augment the distrust and suspicions of the people : the heads of the principal families in France repaired to Coblenz, where a large body were assembled, who made no secret of their intention to regain their rights by the sword ; their inability for action being only equalled by the presumption of their language. The decree for confiscating their estates was prevented



for the present solely by the eloquent voice of Mirabeau, whose aim seemed to be that of repairing the havoc which he had contributed to make in the social system : but neither his brilliant talents nor his assumed virtues could now have resisted the tide of popular ambition ; besides, death cut him short at the most splendid period of his existence, when he was about to undertake the glorious task of healing the wounds of the revolution. His loss was severely felt by the royal party ; as he had formed a plan for the king to escape from that thralldom in which he was held by the populace, whom even La Fayette was unable to control. The subsequent flight of the royal family, and its unfortunate issue at Varennes, re-excited all the evil passions of the Parisian mob : the jacobins and cordeliers loudly demanded the king's death ; and the grand insurrection of the seventeenth of July was planned, which La Fayette, at the head of the national guards, vigorously and wisely dispersed. At that moment, the revolutionary storm was effectually stayed ; and if the existing government had possessed energy enough to act against those retreats of sedition, the clubs of jacobins and cordeliers, the monarchy might have been preserved : but indecision characterised the national assembly ; recollection of the past inclining them to popular measures, though dread of the future disposed them to constitutional principles : in their efforts to please different factions, they acquired an ascendancy over none ; but left the monarchy a prey to the furious passions which agitated the people : the termination of their own legislative labors, and their consequent dissolution, were now approaching ; the several committees had all made their reports ; and nothing remained but to combine the decrees regarding the constitution into one act, and submit it to the king for his sanction. Before this was done, however, the assembly, on the motion of Robespierre, passed a measure, matchless in absurdity, if it had not been predetermined for the purpose of evil ; declaring that none of their members should be capable of re-election : and on this occasion, the misguided royalists agreed with the jacobins, owing to an idea prevalent among them, that a change had taken place in the public mind ; and that if an assembly could be returned at the next election, from which the old members were excluded, it would undo all that had been done.

The result of this fatal step was to sink the representation of the people into a still lower grade of society ; and so effectual was it in this respect, that of 758 members, who con-



stituted the legislative assembly, not more than fifty were possessed of property to the value of £100 per annum: thus ignorance, passion, and inexperience became united in the new council, and popular supremacy made a rapid progress.

The assembly opened its sittings on the first of October: the court and the nobles had exercised no sort of influence on the elections; the authority of the first being in abeyance; and the latter having, after a vain opposition to every species of improvement, deserted their country at the most critical period in its annals: hence, among the parties that constituted the present legislature,<sup>10</sup> none were attached to the regal or aristocratical interests. When the king first met the new assembly, they treated him with premeditated marks of disrespect by sitting uncovered in his presence: the only question that remained, was the maintenance or overthrow of the constitutional throne; nor was it long before this was determined.

Two kinds of enemies threatened the present order of things; the emigrants collected on the frontier, and the discontented priesthood whose members were scattered through the realm: the former had the tacit support of the European courts, and almost the avowed alliance of Austria; the latter

<sup>10</sup> These were, 1. the *feuillants*, or constitutionalists, so called from the club which formed the centre of their power; their leaders being Barnave, Duport, Damas, and Vaublanc: the national guard, the army, and the magistrates of the departments were generally in their interest; but they had not in their ranks the brilliant orators that formed the strength of their adversaries. 2. The Girondists, so called from the district whence the most able of the party were elected, comprehended the republicans of the assembly, under their splendid leaders, Vergnaud, Guadet, Gensonne, Isnard, Brissot, and others, who longed after institutions formed on the model of antiquity: they were, in general, men of honest intentions; indeed, too honest to resist the attacks of a party, who soon set the arts of popularity against the principles of philosophy, and became adepts in the infernal means of exciting the multitude. The leaders of the third party, of anarchists, in the assembly, were Chabot, Bazire, and Merlin, supported by the clubs of the jacobins and cordeliers; in the first of which, Robespierre, Billaud Varrennes, and Collot d'Herbois ruled absolutely; and in the second, Danton, Carrier, Desmoulins, and Fabre d'Eglantine. Robespierre, though excluded from the assembly by his own ordinance, had acquired undisputed sway over the jacobins. In the fauxbourg St. Antoine, the well-known Santerre was equally powerful; while the municipality of Paris, elected by universal suffrage, had fallen into the hands of the most violent demagogues, who were able to rouse at pleasure the whole strength of the capital.



were in communication with the emigrants, and were exciting the peasantry throughout France to revolt. The assembly, in retaliation, passed two decrees; one confiscating the estates of those emigrants who should continue in hostile array on the frontier beyond the first of January; another ordaining measures of like rigor against those priests who should refuse the oath to the constitution, and continue to excite agitation. The king, by the power vested in him, made the first use of his *veto* in suspending these decrees; at which the rage of the revolutionists knew no bounds: unable, therefore, to attack the monarch directly, they turned their resentment against the existing ministers, whom Louis had chosen from the party of the constitutionalists; and Delessart, the secretary for foreign affairs, being accused of betraying the interests of his country in his correspondence with the European courts, was sent for trial before the high court then sitting at Orleans. Thus the party, having lost its influence in the senate as well as in the municipality, (for Petion had succeeded to Bailly as mayor, and La Fayette had resigned his command of the national guard) was soon driven from the ministry; the Girondists and jacobins uniting to complete its ruin.

It was in the debates excited by this question, and by the threatened interference of foreign sovereigns, who entered into a coalition at Pilnitz<sup>11</sup> on the twentieth of July, that Isnard, one of the Girondists, and deputy of Provence, fulminated against them that eloquent oration, which soon resounded through all the courts of Europe. 'They would bring back,' said he, 'our *noblesse*! If all the nobles of the earth assail us, with their gold in one hand and their swords in the other, the French people will combat that imperious race, and force it to endure the penalty of equality. Let us,' said he, in conclusion, 'tell Europe, that if this nation draws the sword it will throw away the scabbard, which it will not seek again till crowned with the laurels of victory; that if cabinets engage kings in a war against the people, we will rouse the people to a mortal strife with sovereigns.' Thus, while war was at first deprecated by the jacobins, who dreaded alike to see the enemy or their own generals victorious, it was clamorously demanded by the Girondists or republicans, who sought to

<sup>11</sup> The Swedish monarch Gustavus first took and gave the alarm: he and Frederic of Prussia were anxious to support the king of France in all his ancient authority; but Leopold of Austria wished to conciliate the nation, and retain for Louis only such power as would secure him on the throne.



spread far and wide the glory of their country ; and had already conceived that bold project of extended conquest, which was realised by Napoleon. The king was driven to choose a ministry from this party ; of which the two principal characters were Roland, the stern republican, unostentatious in manners, unambitious in disposition ; and Dumouriez, the revolutionary general : the former of whom was made minister for the interior, the latter for foreign affairs.<sup>12</sup> Dumouriez had many of the qualities of a great man ; abilities, enterprise, activity, fertility of resources, and confidence in his own fortune ; but these were counterbalanced by others of an opposite tendency ; for he was fickle and inconsiderate ; he adopted measures too hastily to ensure success ; and, veering with all the changes of the times, he wanted the ascendancy of a powerful, as well as the weight of a virtuous character. The new ministry were named by the court *Le ministère sans culottes* ; and it is said, that when Roland presented himself at the palace, in a round hat, and with strings in his shoes ; the horror-struck master of the ceremonies started as if he had seen a ghost, and refused to admit him : but, being informed of his rank, and consequently obliged to let him pass, he turned to Dumouriez, and said with a sigh,—‘ Alas ! sir, a man without buckles in his shoes ! ’—‘ Ah ! ’ rejoined the minister, with sarcastic irony, ‘ if it is come to that, all is lost.’

In Great Britain, as it already has been observed, the leading doctrines of the French revolution were maintained, from various causes, and to different extents, by numerous orators and writers ; among the latter of whom the unitarian dissenters were remarkable : indeed, a large body of sectarians showed themselves too eager in their desire of tampering with the constitution ; clamorous for the destruction of that union betwixt church and state, to which the great body of their countrymen zealously adhered ; and manifesting an indecorous hostility to the principles of monarchical government. In the beginning of this year, Dr. Priestley employed his pen to answer Mr. Burke ; and, after repeating his usual arguments against existing establishments, he exhibited a prophetic vision of the great and manifold blessings which were to flow from the glorious French revolution. This event was to diffuse liberty throughout the world, and to establish the dominion of virtue and happiness : a political millennium was about to be

<sup>12</sup> Lacoste, Clavière, Duranthon, and Servan, were respectively appointed to the marine, the finances, justice, and war.



realised ; when men should be governed by the purity of their own minds and the moderation of their own desires ; without any coercion but that of reason, or any legislature but that of philosophers and the disseminators of truth : soon afterwards came out the 'Rights of Man,' by Paine, who had gone to Paris at the commencement of the revolution ; and, having thoroughly imbibed its sentiments and doctrines, sought to induce his own countrymen to adopt so excellent a model. As Priestley dealt chiefly in prescription, and employed an alterative remedy to every supposed defect ; so Paine was *operatical*, and proposed immediate excision ; a doctrine much more plain and agreeable to the common people. Clubs, formed in imitation of those in France, testified their approbation of these works, particularly of the latter, very cheap editions of which were industriously circulated throughout the country by affiliated societies ; nor did a week pass, in which a pamphlet from some bitter polemic or other was not launched forth against Mr. Burke and other defenders of the constitution. Still, the main body of the people were sound at heart ; while few comparatively among the upper ranks were found to countenance the efforts of sedition.

In this state of things, an occurrence took place, which is much to be regretted, as exhibiting a degree of violence unworthy of the friends of order, and setting an example of ungovernable fury to those very persons who were represented as the foes of all established institutions.

In most of the large towns of England, associations were formed for the celebration of the French revolution, on the fourteenth of July ; but the opposite party were not indifferent spectators of these proceedings ; the most inflammatory insinuations being conveyed in newspapers and pamphlets, stigmatising those who called themselves friends of freedom, as determined republicans ; and representing the act of joining in a convivial party, as an attempt to overturn the British constitution in church and state.

A few days before the meeting at Birmingham, copies of a very inflammatory and seditious hand-bill, proposing the French revolution as a model to Englishmen, and exciting them to rebellion, were left in a public-house by some person unknown ; and as the contents of this paper found a quick and general circulation, they occasioned a great ferment in the town. The magistrates offered a reward of 100 guineas for the discovery of the author, printer, or publisher ; and the friends of the meeting, intended for the fourteenth, published



an advertisement, explicitly denying the seditious doctrines contained in the hand-bill, while they disclaimed all connexion with its author or publisher.

The views and intentions of the meeting, however, having been thus misrepresented, and the gentlemen concerned suspecting the seditious paper to be an artifice of their adversaries, thought it advisable to relinquish the scheme: notice was given to that effect; but, at the pressing instance of several persons dissatisfied with this determination, the intention was revived, and the company met at the appointed time, to the number of between eighty and ninety: the ingenious Keir, well known for his attainments in chemistry and other branches of science, and a member of the established church, was placed in the chair: but the party had scarcely assembled, before the house was surrounded by a tumultuous crowd, who testified their disapprobation by hisses and groans, and by shouts of 'church and king,' which became the watchword on this occasion. At five o'clock, the company dispersed; but soon afterwards the windows in front of the hotel were demolished; and, notwithstanding the appearance of the magistrates, the mob forcibly entered the house in search of the guests, but fortunately found none of them remaining.

Disappointed in this quarter, they immediately set on fire and destroyed two conventicles belonging to the dissenters, and thence proceeded to the house of Dr. Priestley, which, with his library, philosophical apparatus, manuscripts and papers, they totally destroyed: in like manner, they continued, for the next two days, burning the houses and valuable effects of many other dissenters who resided in and near to Birmingham. It was in vain that the magistrates engaged additional constables, for the mob baffled all attempts to disperse them, compelling the constables to retire, and inflicting on many of them severe wounds: on the evening of the third, and morning of the fourth day, however, several troops of cavalry arrived, and restored tranquillity. Of the infatuated rioters, seventeen were tried, and five found guilty; of whom three were executed. Thus terminated a scene, which, though it reflects no honor on our annals, may still be useful, as a warning to deter men from the exhibition of that malignant party spirit, which reflects disgrace even on the best cause.

On the twenty-ninth of September, the political discussions which had so long absorbed public attention were relieved by the marriage of the duke of York with the princess Charlotte Ulrica, eldest daughter of the late king of Prussia: a mutual



affection had subsisted between the parties ever since the royal duke's residence at the court of Berlin. Prince Augustus, his majesty's fifth son, was at this time in Rome, where he received the most marked attentions from his holiness the pope. During the residence of his royal highness in the ancient capital of the world, a circumstance took place, which excited very unpleasant sensations in the minds of the royal family, especially of his majesty : this was the marriage of the prince with lady Augusta Murray, one of the most beautiful and accomplished women in the British dominions : the ceremony was repeated in the following year, after the banns had been put up, at St. George's church, Hanover-square ; but being in direct opposition to an act of parliament, and the union not having been sanctioned by his majesty in council, nor any notice given by his royal highness of his intention to marry, it was subsequently set aside by an appeal to the law : still there remains a legal doubt whether the issue of such marriage is not intitled to succeed to the throne of Hanover, in case the succession should naturally devolve on it.

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## CHAP. XXXV.

## GEORGE III. (CONTINUED.)—1792.

Progress of the French revolution—Invasion of the allies—Deposition of Louis XVI.—National convention—French victories, &c.—Meeting of the British parliament—Debates on the address—Opposite opinions of Fox and Burke regarding the French revolution and the measures to be taken—Conduct of ministers—Manner in which it was noticed in parliament—Notice of the Birmingham rioters by Fox and Whitbread—Mr. Pitt's financial statement—Debates and explanations—Act to increase the sinking-fund in case of loans; violently opposed in the lords by the chancellor—Debates on the Russian armament—Mr. Fox's rash conduct, and Mr. Pitt's forbearance—Act to relieve the Scotch episcopals—Bill to relieve the unitarians rejected—Debates on parliamentary reform—Royal proclamation against seditious writings, illegal correspondence, &c.—Debates on it—Speech of the prince of Wales in the house of lords—Address carried—Prosecutions—London police act—Act to relieve insolvent debtors postponed—Debates on the slave-trade—Bill respecting the New Forest, and timber for the navy—Prorogation of parliament—Great seal taken from lord Thurlow—Mr. Pitt made warden of the cinque-ports—Speculations in canal shares—Relief given to the French emigrant clergy—Review of East Indian affairs during the administration of lord Cornwallis.

THE course of affairs in England was at this period so materially influenced by events in France, that these seem to require a priority of description, in order to render the narrative more clear. The first duty of the new French ministers was to prepare for war, as the state of foreign affairs daily grew more menacing. The pacific Leopold was just dead; and Francis II. was not likely to be influenced by the caution and circumspection of his predecessor: indeed, it seemed necessary that the flame, when once kindled, should spread widely: every passion was excited; every political relation had been altered; old connexions were broken, and old foes had become friends; of which change the connexion of Austria and



Prussia gave the first proof. The cause of Louis XVI. seemed to be the cause of kings; and a gallant monarch<sup>13</sup> was about to place himself at its head, when he was suddenly snatched away by assassination: the conduct of the various cabinets was far from faultless; but the fearful scenes in France were so new, that they lay wholly out of the range of their antique policy: indeed, one of the greatest advantages of the democratic party consisted in this;—that they banished cabinet policy intirely out of their system.

Austria was now collecting her troops; and the ultimatum on which she would agree to discontinue her preparations, was the re-establishment of the French constitution on the basis of the declaration of June, 1789; the restitution of their property to the clergy; the cession of Alsace to the German princes, and of Avignon to the pope. These terms were like a summons directed to the torrent, or a command to the whirlwind: the assembly determined on war; and Louis, pressed alike by his friends, his ministers, and his enemies, was obliged to propose a measure, by which the interests of his family would necessarily be injured, whichever side was victorious: in one case, his people would be more imperious in their demands; in the other, he would be accused of treachery, and loaded with reproaches.

The Girondist ministers made themselves odious to what was still called a court, by their uncouthness and pretensions; and, above all, Dumouriez was false: finding himself in office, he broke with the Girondists as he had done with the constitutionalists, and influenced the king to resist their counsels: this again raised the spirits of the old royalists, and induced Louis to listen once more to them. The first action on the frontiers, being unfavorable to the revolutionary soldiers, who fled in a panic, raised still higher the hopes of the royalists about the palace; but the populace were proportionally excited, and the seeds of insurrection sown afresh.

From the moment that Dumouriez, and with him the monarch, broke with the Girondists, or rather with the majority of the legislative assembly, (for the Girondists and jacobins coalesced in public measures) the latter directed all their hostility against the throne: with this view, they proposed to establish, under the walls of the capital, a camp of federals from the provinces, composed of the most furious revolutionists in the nation, ready to act on all occasions with

<sup>13</sup> Gustavus, king of Sweden.



the Parisian populace against the national guard, whose interference was dreaded by the republicans. Here was another crisis in the reign of Louis: had he seized it, the supremacy of the mob at least might have been prevented. Many thousands of the national guards and of the more respectable citizens petitioned against the federal camp: the middle classes were roused to a sense of their danger; they perceived that the Girondists were betraying them, and that there was a necessity for defending the throne. Dumouriez now urged the king to throw the whole weight of his influence into the scale of the constitutional party; but the Girondists, seeing the opportunity thus left open to him, determined to close it, by sending to him a decree respecting the nonjuring and seditious priesthood: this he resisted; and his resistance appeared to the citizens to result from a want of cordiality towards the revolution. The scheme succeeded; Dumouriez's advice was rejected; and the monarch, in his exasperation, defied the Girondists and the popular body, without rallying round him the national guards or the citizens. The Girondist ministers were now dismissed; and Dumouriez, foreseeing the catastrophe that ensued, set out for the army, where he soon established for himself a high military reputation.

The new administration was chosen from among the *feuillants*, but it possessed no weight either with their party or the nation; and the king, having lost the support of the only men capable of controlling the revolution at the very moment when its violence was about to break out, fell into a state of the deepest depression, from which he was extricated only by the mental energy of the queen. Alarmed at the dangers now surrounding the monarchy, the leaders of the monarchical party and of the *feuillants* united to repress the growing spirit of insubordination. La Fayette also wrote on the sixteenth of June an energetic letter to the assembly, denouncing the jacobin faction, demanding the dissolution of the clubs, and conjuring the friends of liberty to confine themselves to legal measures; but he only excited indignation against himself, and failed in calming the populace. The Girondists, chagrined at the loss of their places in the administration, proceeded to the most disastrous excesses; and, allying themselves to the mob, inflamed them by petitions and harangues, in the hope of intimidating the court: the populace were taught that Louis Capet, by his single word of dissent, prevented the levy of the federal army, which might save the nation from the European league; that at such a time he had discharged



honest and zealous ministers ; and encouraged the priesthood, the sworn enemies of the revolution, and the firm allies of the Austrians : in the mean time, by direction of the Girondists, a general insurrection was prepared in the fauxbourgs, and a body of 10,000 men organised in the quarter of St. Antoine. Thus, while the royalists were urging the advance of the European powers, the populace was stirred up to insurrection by the patriots, who, before one year expired, fell victims to the violence which they had excited.

The demagogues sought the first pretext for arming the people, under the plea of preparing for the approach of the enemy : pikes were accordingly forged and distributed ; and as the twentieth of June was near, it was resolved to celebrate the anniversary of the tennis-court, in view of the Tuilleries. The Girondists favored the plan, in hopes that the king, through intimidation, would abandon his *veto* : the rabble therefore assembled to the number of 30,000 pikemen, with the ferocious Santerre at their head, and proceeded first to the assembly with a violent petition : from thence they rushed with furious cries towards the Tuilleries ; broke into the palace, and insulted the king with outrageous demands, that he should instantly ratify the decrees against the priests, and sanction the establishment of a federal camp. His majesty never exhibited so much fortitude as on this trying occasion : he bore all their insults with calmness ; and to their reiterated demands, he merely replied,—‘ This is neither the time nor the way to obtain them from me.’

These events excited great indignation throughout France ; and the admirable coolness of the king in his dangerous circumstances extorted admiration even from his enemies. The duc de la Rochefoucault, who commanded at Rouen, offered him an asylum there ; La Fayette invited him to Compiègne, where he might throw himself into the arms of the constitutional forces ; and the national guard offered to protect his person : but Louis declined all these proposals ; he hoped for deliverance from the allied powers, and was unwilling to compromise himself by openly joining the constitutional party. La Fayette made a last effort to save the throne, by leaving the army, and presenting himself before the assembly, with a strong address from the soldiers against the late excesses ; demanding that their authors should be punished, and vigorous measures taken to put down the jacobins : success even appeared likely to attend his representations ; but Louis refused to be saved by a person, whom he considered as the author of



his misfortunes : La Fayette therefore departed in despair at the fatuity both of the king and queen ; not, however, without making a vain attempt to disperse the jacobins, by whom he was burnt in effigy on the scene of his civic triumphs in the Palais Royal. This was the last struggle of the constitutionalists : meanwhile, the Girondists and republicans, emboldened by La Fayette's failure, aimed openly at the king's dethronement ; the minds of men were wound up to the highest pitch by inflammatory harangues ; and it was proclaimed to the citizens, that 'the country was in danger.' A general frenzy now seized the public mind ; many departments openly defied the authority of government ; and, without any orders, sent their contingents to form the federal camp near Paris.

The approach of a crisis became evident on the fourteenth of July, when a *fête* was held in commemoration of the storming of the Bastille ; and the king went in procession, with the queen and dauphin, to the Champ de Mars. The soldiers, who could with difficulty keep back the intrusion of the mob, were wholly unable to prevent its maledictions, uttered against their monarch and his perfidious flight : he returned to the palace in extreme dejection ; nor did he appear again in public till he ascended the scaffold. In the mean time, the announcement of 'the country in danger' put all France in motion, and brought thousands of hot-brained youth to increase the dreadful fermentation of the capital : to these new-comers the assembly gave the exclusive use of its galleries ; paying them thirty sous a day out of the public treasury ; and incorporating them into a society, which soon surpassed the jacobins themselves in democratic violence : a determination to overthrow the monarchy was openly announced by these ferocious bands ; among whom some of the French guards were incorporated by the assembly, in order to give them a species of discipline and organisation. The whole jealousy of the assembly was now directed against the court, from whose vengeance, if the allies should be victorious, they expected speedy and condign punishment : they therefore closed the society of the *feuillants*, disbanded a portion of the national guard, and removed to a distance from Paris all the troops on whose fidelity they could not rely. The court, in the tottering state of its authority, having no hope left but in the advance of the allied powers, took all possible measures to gain time for their approach : committees of royalists were formed, and attempts were made to arrest the progress of the insurrection ; but the efforts of a



few loyal spirits were lost in the midst of revolutionary millions.

Yet the leaders of the conspiracy still wavered, doubting whether the popular mind was sufficiently excited to ensure the success of their enterprise: this cause of delay, however, was soon removed by the advance and injudicious conduct of the allied troops. The duke of Brunswick broke up from Coblenz on the twenty-fifth of July, and passed the French boundaries with 70,000 Prussians, and nearly as many Austrians and Hessians: his march was preceded by a proclamation drawn up by Calonne; in which he reproached the usurpers of authority in France with having troubled social order, and overturned the legitimate government; with having committed daily outrages on the king and queen, invaded the rights of the German princes in Alsace and Lorrain, and declared war unnecessarily against the king of Hungary and Bohemia: in consequence, the allied sovereigns had taken up arms to arrest the progress of anarchy, and restore the legitimate authority of the king, without any view to individual aggrandisement; and the national guards would be held responsible for the maintenance of order until the arrival of the allied forces: finally, the assembly and the municipality were ordered to liberate their monarch; and it was declared, that the act of forcing the palace, or any insult offered to the royal family, would be followed by an exemplary punishment, in the total destruction of the city.

So exasperating a proclamation, enforced by no rapid or efficient military operations, served only to injure the cause it advocated, and to accelerate the march of revolution. The leaders of the jacobins had no longer any reason to complain of a want of enthusiasm among the people: this manifesto was regarded as a document unfolding the real views of the emigrants and of the court; and there appeared to the people no choice but between victory and death. The chiefs of the different parties strove to convert this effervescence into means of advancing their own interests: the Girondists were desirous to have the king dethroned by a decree of the assembly; but the leaders of the popular insurrection<sup>14</sup> and their associates, who aimed at the destruction both of the legislature and the throne, prevented a measure which would have established the supremacy of the former body. The arrival of

<sup>14</sup> Danton, Robespierre, Marat, Camille Desmoulins, and Fabre d'Eglantine.



the federal troops from Marseilles, in the beginning of August, increased the strength and confidence of the insurgents: the dethronement of the king was vehemently discussed in all the popular clubs; and a deputation, with Petion at its head, appeared at the bar of the assembly, to demand it in the name of the municipality and sections: on the eighth, the irritation of the populace was still farther increased by a vote of the assembly, discarding an accusation brought against La Fayette, who had become an object of execration to the populace: on the ninth, the effervescence was extreme, and the constitutionalists were publicly insulted by the Marseillois; at midnight, the tocsin was sounded throughout Paris; and the insurgents, assembling in great strength at the different points of rendezvous, continued to collect together their forces throughout that night of horror, which preceded the fall of the oldest monarchy in Europe. On the morning of the tenth, the several columns were complete: Santerre, the brewer, led those of the fauxbourg St. Antoine, in number about 15,000; but the headquarters of the insurrection were at the club of the cordeliers, where Danton ruled with undisputed sway: at his cry,—‘to arms!’ the insurgents, especially the Marseillois, impatiently called for the signal to march; and the cannon of all the sections began to roll towards the centre of the city.

Their first step was to seize the Hotel de Ville, dismiss the municipality, and appoint a new magistracy called the *commune*, selected from the most violent demagogues: while the rest of the insurrectionary forces were drawing towards this central point, a large proportion of the national guard repaired to the Tuilleries, where the few royalists, who still remained in Paris, hastened also to the defence of their sovereign: the only troops, however, that could be relied on, were the Swiss guards, mustering about 800 men. At the first alarm, the assembly met; and though their disposition was to defend the throne, the insurrection of the people had deprived them of the power. The events of this disastrous day, in which the queen of France exhibited the spirit of a heroine, and the king that of a martyr, are too well known to need a particular description. The defence of the palace was soon forsaken by the national guards, whose colonel, Mandat, had been that morning murdered by the populace, and whose loyalty was shaken by observing so many royalists in the palace: the gendarmes, composed chiefly of the old French guards, again betrayed their sovereign; and the faithful Swiss alone remained. While masses of the insurgents were penetrating into the courts of the château,



the king, following the advice of Rœderer, procureur of the new commune, against all the remonstrances of his spirited consort, repaired with his family to the assembly; and the attack commenced. The courageous bearing of the Swiss, who vigorously charged and repulsed the Marseillois rabble, might even then have prevailed over the popular insurrection; but the king himself was destined to strike the fatal blow to his own cause, by sending an order for them to retire, and abandon the palace: the message was only given to one battalion, which instantly repaired to the assembly; and the rest of these faithful soldiers, after defending the staircase for a short time, were driven in, and inhumanly butchered by the mob, whose victory is said to have cost them 3000 slain. The assembly concluded the crimes of this bloody day by a decree, suspending their sovereign from his functions; ordering the formation of a national convention; and appointing a new ministry, in which the old Girondists, Roland, Servan, and Clavière recovered their offices, and Petion was allowed to retain that of mayor. Such were the terms tacitly granted to the assembly by the jacobins, for acknowledging their new municipality; but to the Girondist ministers were added Lebrun and Danton; the former being entrusted with the department of foreign affairs, the latter with that of justice: thus were the jacobins supported, when it became necessary to take measures for the defence of the kingdom. The Girondists, alarmed at the approach of the allied armies, and displeased at the domineering conduct of the jacobins and the commune, conceived the plan of abandoning Paris, and defending the country behind the Loire; but their opponents held the uncompromising language of bold defiance; and, inspired by the forcible eloquence of Danton, resolved to bury themselves under the ruins of the capital, rather than desert it. ‘You know,’ said that demagogue, in the committee of general defence, ‘that France lives in Paris; and there we must maintain our position: but it is impossible to think of fighting under its walls; for the tenth of August has divided France into two parties, of which one is attached to monarchy, the other desires a republic: the latter and the smaller party, is the only one on which you can rely; the other will refuse to march, will agitate Paris in favor of the foreigners, and will place your defenders between two fires. If these defenders fail, as I think they will, the ruin of yourselves and your country is certain and immediate: even if they succeed, their victory will not save you from danger; for it will cost you thou-



sands of brave men ; while the royalists, already superior in numbers, will have lost nothing of their strength. My advice therefore is, that, to disconcert their measures, we should frighten the royalists.' As the committee, who well understood the sense of these terrible words, seemed by their silence to reject his advice, Danton entered into engagements with the commune : he wished to repress his enemies by terror ; and, by making the multitude his accomplices, to leave the revolution no hope or refuge but in victory. This was the origin of those frightful massacres which soon took place in France, the victims being chiefly selected from the two dissident classes of clergy and nobility. The assembly wished to put a stop to them, but had not the power ; while the ministry was as impotent as the assembly : the terrible commune was omnipotent, under the influence and direction of a man, in whose eyes the welfare of his party went far beyond all the laws of humanity.

The French troops first sent to repel the invasion, were inferior to their antagonists in discipline and equipment : besides, they soon became paralysed by intestine divisions, and their ranks were thinned by frequent desertions : but the revolution of the tenth of August changed both the command of the armies, and the state of military affairs. La Fayette, having in vain endeavored to raise the standard of revolt against the jacobins, and engage his army in the cause of the constitutionalists, was compelled to fly for safety to the Austrian lines ; and as Luckner had disobeyed the orders of the convention, the command of both their divisions was transferred to Dumouriez, though the Girondists still felt some rancor against him, and his ambitious views were suspected even by those who rendered justice to his military talents.

The allies proceeded slowly, and with apparent timidity, in a country which they professed to consider as the scene of certain conquest ; and they only invested Verdun on the thirtieth of August : the capitulation of that place on the second of September left the road to Paris open for their advance ; but their dilatory conduct, and the enterprising genius of Dumouriez, counteracted all their advantages. As every thing depended on the occupation of the defiles in the forest of Argonne, that important post was immediately seized by the French general, who likened it to another Thermopylæ ; ' though,' he said, ' I shall be more fortunate than Leonidas.' In that position he was able to stop the enemy, while he waited for the succors which were at this time hastening to him from



all parts of France: even though he was driven from his post, he recovered his advantages through the slow operations and indecision of the enemy, and maintained another strong position at St. Menehould, until he was joined by the divisions under Kellerman and Bournonville; when his army amounted to 70,000 men. The success of the campaign then became almost certain: on the twentieth of September, the allied army attacked Kellerman at Valmy; and the almost insignificant success of that day produced on the French troops, and throughout France, the effect of a complete victory. The allies, on the other hand, were unprovided with stores or provisions; continued rains had broken up the roads; and for four days consecutively the troops had no other nourishment than boiled corn; disease began to make extensive ravages in their army; and the duke of Brunswick commenced a retreat: in this he acted against the opinion of the king of Prussia and the emigrants, who would have risked a battle, and seized on Châlons: but as the fate of the Prussian monarchy almost depended on the army, the loss of which would have certainly followed defeat, the advice of the duke prevailed. Negotiations were then opened; and the allies, relaxing in their terms, merely demanded the restoration of the king to the constitutional throne: but the convention had just been assembled, the republic had been proclaimed, and the executive council refused to listen to any proposition until the allied troops had quitted the French territories: they accordingly effected a retreat, which was feebly opposed by Kellerman; while Dumouriez set out for the capital, to enjoy his triumph, and to make arrangements for the invasion of Belgium. The moment was one of elation: the French general Custine had taken Trèves, Spire, and Mayence, the very key of the Rhine; Savoy and Nice were occupied by French armies; and the Austrians had retreated from Lille. Hastening therefore from the applauses and the *fêtes* with which he was welcomed in Paris, the victorious general marched against the Austrians, over whom he gained the bloody battle of Jemappe, and entered as a conqueror into Brussels on the fourteenth of November: Liege surrendered on the twenty-eighth: Valence took Namur; Labourdonnaie obtained possession of Antwerp; and before the end of December, all the Low Countries were intirely in the hands of the French. This important conquest showed to the startled nations of Europe the altered nature of the war, while it prepared them for its farther extension. On these very provinces the old political system had principally rested; for they were the



bulwark of Holland. One battle now decided their fate, which at other times several campaigns had been unable to decide; and men, hitherto unknown, took the lead as skilful generals. The bloodless seizure of Savoy also afforded a sample of the new republican international law.

Even in this time of triumph over foreign enemies, the republicans felt all their vindictive rage excited against the unfortunate Louis XVI. The convention was divided between two powerful parties; the first, consisting of Girondists, under Brissot, Petion, Vergniaud, &c.;—and the second of extreme jacobins, led by Danton, Robespierre, Fabre d'Eglantine, Chabot, and others, who assumed the name of the Mountain;<sup>15</sup> a faction, which soon made up for its inferiority in numbers by its superior intrigue and audacity. Thus, from the very commencement of its sitting, the convention was threatened with new convulsions, in the struggles of these parties; both of which, however, concurred in the propriety of bringing the king to trial, though it was supposed the Girondists meant to spare his life: both agreed also in the famous decree of the nineteenth of November, which offered fraternity to the people of all countries disposed to revolt: indeed, the language of the French government towards other states had long been such, as to excite serious apprehension among the friends of order. Not only the orators in the clubs, but the members of the assembly, and of the convention, proclaimed the doctrine of fraternisation with the revolutionary party throughout the world; and the annexation of the little states of Avignon and the Venaisin was early marked by Mr. Burke as indicating an ambitious spirit, which ere long the limits of Europe would not be able to contain.

The British parliament met on the thirty-first of January; and his majesty's speech dwelt chiefly on the rapidly increasing prosperity of the nation, tending to confirm the attachment of his subjects to a constitution which had been found to unite the blessings of liberty and order; and to which, under Providence, all our advantages were principally to be ascribed: the general state of affairs in Europe was represented as promising a continuance of peace; and an expectation was held out of a speedy reduction in our naval and military establishments. The debates on the address, and some succeeding discussions in both houses, turned principally on the line of

<sup>15</sup> So called from the upper seats on the left of the assembly, which they occupied.



conduct pursued by ministers in their interference between Turkey and Russia, which was marked by so much hostility toward the latter power. Mr. Jenkinson,<sup>16</sup> in a maiden speech, much admired for its extensive views of the existing state of Europe as bearing on this country, observed, that the strength and influence of France being at an end, we had no farther danger to apprehend from that once formidable rival; but a power had succeeded to France, no less deserving of attention from its restless politics and ambitious views; and that power was Russia. As if to confirm the truth of his remarks respecting the great northern power, Catharine, this very year, signed a new treaty of partition with the other royal plunderers, of which unhappy Poland was the object: the prediction, however, concerning France was a notable instance of the danger of prophesying.

Mr. Fox, conceiving himself, and those who coincided in his sentiments respecting the French revolution, indirectly censured by praises of British policy, exerted himself to show that an expression of satisfaction at the overthrow of French despotism, so inimical to civil rights and human happiness, was compatible with a perfect veneration for the British constitution, the preserver and promoter of both: he rejoiced in the subversion of French despotism, because it was an acknowledged evil; but he would use every effort to support the British constitution, because it was an undoubted good. In subsequent discussions, he more explicitly declared his opinions on this momentous subject; showing how illogical it was to confound the principles of the revolution with its excesses, and to make freedom herself answerable for that mass of guilt and folly which her enemies and injudicious supporters were mainly influential in producing: he esteemed the outrages that were committed merely as incidental effects of an ardent enthusiasm, which must be temporary; while the free principles, and the institutions established on them, would subsist for ages after the passion had subsided. Mr. Burke, on the contrary, reckoned these outrages to be essential characters of the revolution, which legitimately descended from its nature and principles, and would go on increasing in number and magnitude: he inveighed against the whole nation as actuated with a diabolical spirit, and as bent on the perpetration of all possible mischief; a phenomenon never before known in the annals of the world. From such opposite views in theory, these illustrious statesmen

<sup>16</sup> The late earl of Liverpool.



recommended equally opposite systems of practice. Burke very early inculcated the necessity of a confederacy, to put down this diabolical spirit; which otherwise would insinuate itself into other nations, and produce a general destruction of social order: Fox, regarding it only as the spirit of enthusiasm, advised an abstinence from all hostile interference, which would support rather than extinguish the passion; turn its efforts to external defence; and give it an energy, that would prove fatal to those who roused it into action.

As ministers avoided the delivery of opinions on events and systems which had not yet interfered with the interests of their own country, the subject of the French revolution was not brought directly before parliament; though many of its proceedings arose from questions of liberty or reform, which that great event was instrumental in suggesting. Mr. Fox thought it extraordinary, that, when his majesty mentioned the inestimable blessings of peace and order, no notice was taken of the violation of order in the riots of the preceding year, which had revived the spirit and practice of the darkest ages: they were not riots for bread; not riots in the cause of liberty, which, however highly to be reprobated, had some excuse in their principle; but they were riots of men, neither aggrieved nor complaining; of men, who had set on foot an indiscriminate persecution of one intire description of their fellow subjects; including persons as eminent for ability, as blameless in conduct; and as faithful in allegiance, as this or any country could produce. Mr. Whitbread, a new member of considerable talents, who had joined Mr. Fox's party, subsequently re-echoed these sentiments; and imputed the outrages complained of to the encouragement which was given by government to persecutors of dissenters, because that body of men were inimical to civil and ecclesiastical tyranny.

Mr. Pitt strongly deprecated the invidious revival of a subject so unpleasant and unprofitable; wishing rather to call the attention of the house to the flourishing condition of the finances, a correct statement of which he intended soon to lay before them: accordingly, at an early day, he brought this subject regularly forward, and in an animated speech drew a picture of national prosperity beyond that which the most fervent imagination could have suggested. After a few introductory observations on the welcome intelligence conveyed to them in his majesty's speech, relative to the improvement of the public revenue, he informed the house that the income of the country last year had amounted to £16,730,000, which



exceeded that of the preceding year by £300,000, and the average of the last four years by more than half a million. There having been a constantly progressive increase in the revenue for the last four years, he thought himself justified in considering the average of those years, namely, £16,212,000, as the future annual produce, and in making his calculations on that supposition. Allowing for some necessary alterations, which he specified, he estimated the future annual expenditure at £15,811,000, which left £401,000 to be disposed of: he therefore proposed to add £200,000 a year to the sinking fund, and take off taxes to the same amount, selecting such as would most relieve the poor and industrious classes. The sum remaining in the exchequer unappropriated, enabled him farther to propose, that in the present year £400,000, in addition to the annual million, should be applied to the reduction of the national debt, and £100,000 towards the expenses of the Spanish armament; by which arrangement the additional tax imposed last year on malt might be immediately taken off: the other taxes which he wished to repeal, were those on female servants, carts and waggons, houses having less than seven windows, and candles as far as the last halfpenny per pound. He enumerated the various articles of the supply of the current year, which amounted to £5,654,000; and of the ways and means, which were £5,691,000; leaving an excess of £37,000 in their favor. He held out a most encouraging prospect of still farther relief from the future repeal of taxes; and though he was aware of the many contingences, which, by disturbing the public tranquillity, might prevent such a design; yet there never was a time, he said, in the history of this country, when, from the situation of Europe, fifteen years of peace might more reasonably be expected, than at the present moment. He went through various calculations respecting the operation of the sinking fund, which he expected would reach its maximum of four millions in 1808; and he intimated his intention of submitting to the house, on a subsequent day, a plan relative to future loans, in case of a war. Having then pointed out the gradual and uniform increase in all the principal branches of the revenue, as well as the exports and imports, he proceeded to investigate the peculiar causes to which these effects might be ascribed; among which, he enumerated, and dilated on, the natural industry and energy of the country in improving manufactures, and abridging of labor; the extension and stability of its credit; the exploring and enterprising spirit of its merchants; and, more especially,



that accumulation of capital, which arises from the continual application of a portion of the profit obtained in each year, to be employed in a similar manner, and with continued profit, in the year following; by which means the great mass of property in the nation is constantly increasing at compound interest; the progress of which, in any considerable period, is what at first view appears incredible. To the foregoing causes, he added the duration of peace; and that union of liberty with law, under our happy government, which, by raising a barrier against the encroachments of power and the violence of popular commotion, affords to property its just security, and sets in motion all the springs that act on the community at large. 'From the result of the whole,' said Mr. Pitt, 'I trust I am intitled to conclude, that the scene which we are now contemplating is not the transient effect of accident, not the short-lived prosperity of a day; but the general and natural result of regular and permanent causes. Though we may yet be subject to those fluctuations which often occur in the affairs of a mighty nation, and which it is impossible to calculate or foresee; yet, as far as reliance can be placed on human speculations, we have the best ground, from experience of the past, for looking with satisfaction on the present, and with confidence towards the future.' Such were the brilliant hopes, which in this moment of ministerial exultation the nation was taught to entertain; and with such dazzling, but deceptive brightness, rose the morn of a year, destined to close in darkness, calamity, and blood.

When Mr. Pitt had concluded his speech, Mr. Fox paid a high compliment to his eloquence, and to the sound philosophical principles on which he had argued. The causes of national prosperity, he said, had been enumerated with truth and splendor: he subscribed to the statement most cordially; and if he did not himself go over the same ground, it was because he could add nothing to what had been said; nor could he hope to express it better. Mr. Sheridan, however, denied that the state of the revenue warranted a repeal of taxes; and promised to move, on a future day, for a committee of inquiry into the real amount of public income and expenditure: at present, he contented himself with asserting, that a repeal would, under any circumstances, be an infringement on the principle of redemption, for which the whole surplus of revenue was demanded.

Mr. Pitt, in reply, denied that the house was pledged so to apply it; nor had he ever declared or entertained such an in-



tention : he persevered in affirming, that even on the disadvantageous principle of taking the average of the last four years, there was a surplus sufficient to justify the appropriation of the sum mentioned to the discharge of the debt, and to the repeal of the taxes which he had specified. He had, he said, several reasons for preferring to pay off the funded rather than the unfunded debt ; the principal of which was, that by so doing, he should sooner be able to reduce the four per cents, which were then redeemable ; and afterwards to pay off as much of the national debt as would enable him to redeem the five per cents, which could not be done till £25,000,000 of the funded debt were actually paid off ; for on that condition they were originally established.

Mr. Fox candidly admitted that the reduction of the four per cents would be a most politic measure ; as the nation, according to a calculation which he had made, would draw from it an annual benefit of more than £260,000 ; and he wished that Mr. Pitt had explained more fully his ideas on that subject : a well-concerted plan should have his support. The rise of the funds, in his judgment, was a great national benefit ; for though it threw obstacles in the way of paying off the national debt ; it invigorated every branch of our prosperity, by making money more attainable, and thereby producing wealth, which more than counterbalanced the difference we had to pay in buying up the debts. If we considered the amount of our debt, the principal was certainly increased by the rise of the funds : but though the principal was clearly more now than in 1786, the annuity paid by the nation was less ; and to the annuity he looked as the true debt, which was our enemy. All the resolutions moved by Mr. Pitt, and the bills founded on them, were unanimously agreed to. At the time of this debate, the three per cents were as high as ninety-four, and it was the minister's intention to propose a reduction of the four per cents to three and a half ; but, on farther consideration, he determined to defer the measure to the next session, when he hoped to be able to reduce them to three per cents.<sup>17</sup> So little at this time did he dream of those sinister events that thwarted his projects : at the end of the year the three per cents had dropped to seventy-four, and the design was of course abandoned.

It was not long before Mr. Pitt brought forward another important measure, to which he had already alluded. Being

<sup>17</sup> Tomline, vol. iii. p. 299.



apprehensive that, in case of a new and protracted war, requiring large additions to the public debt, the sinking fund might not operate with sufficient effect to prevent a national bankruptcy, from which tremendous calamity we narrowly escaped at the end of last war; he now proposed, that, whenever a loan should hereafter be made, one per cent on the new stock thus created, beside the dividends, should be raised and applied in the same manner, and under the same regulations, as the original £1,000,000. Thus every loan would be accompanied by its own sinking fund, which would operate at compound interest, and discharge the debt in forty-seven years, supposing a three per cent fund paid off at par; and in every other case in a shorter period.

This bill, which passed the commons without any particular difficulty, was most unexpectedly, and, to the astonishment of every one, violently reprobated in the house of lords by the chancellor Thurlow, as a provision likely to answer no good purpose; also as exhibiting an extraordinary degree of arrogance, by dictating to future parliaments, and prescribing to ministers a mode of action to be adopted twenty or thirty years hence. 'None,' said his lordship, 'but a novice, a sycophant, a mere reptile of a minister, would allow this act to prevent him doing what, in his own judgment, circumstances might require at the time; and a change in the situation of the country might render that which is proper at one time inapplicable at another: in short, the scheme is nugatory and impracticable; the inaptness of the project is only equalled by the vanity of the attempt.' Notwithstanding this opposition, the bill passed into a law, and was invariably adhered to in the numerous loans advanced, and under the heaviest pecuniary pressure felt during the whole revolutionary contest. It may be considered as extending the principle of the bill of 1786; rendering it a simple and practical system for the payment of national debts; one by which this country was enabled to support an unexampled accumulation of burdens; and, in a war of extinction, not only to save itself, but to rescue other nations also from slavery and ruin.

Two motions were brought forward in the house of commons, the first by Mr. Grey, and the second by Mr. Whitbread, to condemn the measures taken by administration with regard to the Russian armament; when Mr. Pitt, after paying a just compliment to the splendid eloquence which Mr. Fox had displayed on the occasion, submitted to the house a plain statement of the grounds on which he



had acted. The measure, he said, was founded on the principle of preserving the balance of power in Europe: he was convinced that the interest and honor of this country required the most vigilant attention to the political situation of the continental powers, lest the predominance of any one should destroy that equipoise which was allowed to be essential to the safety of the whole. From the time of William III. the Ottomans had been always considered as effective allies or formidable enemies; and it was evident that the ruin or depression of the Turkish empire must materially affect the balance of power. It was well known that the object of Russia had long been to acquire exclusive sovereignty in the Black Sea; and were they, by expelling the Turks, to gain possession of its ports, a new naval power would arise, dangerous to all Europe, but particularly to Great Britain, whose safety and prosperity mainly depended on the superiority of her fleets: it was surely then of importance to check the rapid progress of Russia, and induce her to desist from schemes of dismembering the Turkish dominions. He acknowledged that Oczakow was not a place of great importance; but as a fortress commanding the navigation of the Niester, and a point to be gained by the empress in her system of ambition, it was worth some risks, though not all; and he conceived that he had equally done his duty in first attempting to secure this object to Turkey, and afterwards in relinquishing it when it could only be obtained at too high a price: it might, however, have been secured by the means which were used, had it not been for the division and opposition excited in this kingdom, and for another proceeding to which he had alluded on a former occasion. Mr. Fox therefore might triumph in his success; but it was a triumph over the friends and the counsels of his country. The motions were all rejected, either without a division, or by very large majorities.

The proceeding, to which Mr. Pitt alluded at the conclusion of his speech, had reference to Mr. Fox, who certainly carried party principles on this occasion to a length, which Mr. Burke, in his 'Observations on the Conduct of the Minority,' justly characterised as leading to 'a most unconstitutional act, and a highly-treasonable misdemeanor.'

The laws and constitution of this country entrust the exclusive right of treating with foreign potentates to the king, as an undisputed part of the regal prerogative: yet Mr. Fox, without the knowlege or participation of a single member in the house, thought proper to send Mr. Adair, as his repre-



sentative, and with his cipher, to St. Petersburg, there to frustrate the objects for which the minister from the crown was authorised to treat: and he succeeded in his design; thereby contributing to render the legitimate mode of communication between this nation and other powers uncertain and precarious; opening a road for the intrigues of foreign powers in our affairs; and setting an evil example to the mischievous societies at this time in England, which were forming leagues and alliances with revolutionary France. 'It is to be presumed,' says Mr. Pitt's biographer,<sup>18</sup> 'that Mr. Fox never would have had recourse to such a measure, if he had not entertained a confident hope, that, having already succeeded in rendering the Russian armament unpopular, he should upset Mr. Pitt's administration, provided the empress could be prevailed on to persevere in her demands: that point he accomplished without difficulty; yet the result did not turn out as he expected: he defeated Mr. Pitt's plan, and brought a certain degree of discredit and danger on his country by effecting the aggrandisement of an unfriendly and powerful court; but his own personal ambition remained ungratified.' Mr. Pitt, on this occasion, exhibited marks of a high mind and a forgiving spirit, by forbearing to make his rival's conduct the subject of formal inquiry, or even of actual discussion, in the house of commons.

In this session the Scotch episcopalians were relieved from many legal restraints, for which no reason existed, after the extinction of the house of Stuart: an objection indeed was started to the bill brought in for this purpose in the house of peers, by the lord chancellor, who asked, whether, according to a clause in it specifying the description of persons to be relieved, the state could with propriety recognise the validity of ordination by bishops exercising their functions independently of the state? In his profound knowledge of ecclesiastical antiquity, his lordship even ventured to intimate his doubts, whether bishops could exist in any christian country, not authorised by the state: but being assured by the bishop of St. Davids, that christian bishops existed 300 years before the alliance between church and state took place under the emperor Constantine, his lordship was pleased to declare himself satisfied; and the bill passed without any farther opposition. The unitarians, taking advantage of this concession made to the

<sup>18</sup> Tomline's Life of Pitt, vol. iii. p. 309. 'This transaction,' says the bishop, (p. 312.) 'was well known in Turkey, where great surprise was expressed that Mr. Fox had not lost his head for such conduct.'



Scotch church, applied for a repeal of the penal statutes regarding themselves: but to the usual reasons for rejecting the application, were now added others, arising from their objectionable practices, in the formation of democratical clubs, and the dissemination of inflammatory publications.

Though the many attempts made to obtain a parliamentary reform had uniformly proved unsuccessful, they were yet far from being unproductive of effects, while they provoked discussions, tending to make those evils more apparent, which the legislature refused to remedy: from this source, and from the knowledge conveyed through numerous publications, the nature of our representative system came to be well understood; and, in consequence of that knowledge, several political societies were formed for the purpose of procuring a reform in parliament. One of these, composed chiefly of tradesmen, assumed the title of the 'London Corresponding Society,' and adopted to its full extent the system of reform recommended by the duke of Richmond, which rested on the basis of universal suffrage and annual parliaments: but another society, formed about the same period, and known by the name of the 'Friends of the People,' attracted more attention, both from the government and the nation. The members of this association adopted principles of reform which Pitt himself had supported, and which had been sanctioned by the approbation of several distinguished advocates for constitutional liberty: about thirty of them were members of parliament, and many others were eminently distinguished by their political or literary talents; but not a few were such as threw discredit on the society by the violence and unconstitutional nature of their opinions. After publishing a declaration of their sentiments, and an address to the people of Great Britain, inviting such as agreed with them to join the associates, they determined that early in the next session a motion for reform should be brought forward; and that the conduct of it in the house of commons should be committed to Messrs. Grey and Erskine, both of whom were members. In conformity with this resolution, the former of those gentlemen gave notice, on the thirtieth of April, that in the ensuing session he would move for an inquiry respecting the state of the representation, into which so many abuses had crept through neglect, or been introduced by corruption, that they threatened the very existence of the constitution itself, and, in his opinion, could only be corrected by a timely and temperate reform. He had scarcely concluded this intimation, when



Mr. Pitt rose, and said, 'he believed that it was not strictly regular to make any observations on the notice of a motion; and therefore he was under the correction of the chair, whether he should articulate a syllable.' 'Go on! go on!' was immediately echoed from all parts of the house. He then proceeded to say, that if ever there was an occasion, on which the mind of a man, who felt for the present, or hoped for the future happiness of his country, should be interested, this was the time for its exertion. Nothing could be said, nothing could be whispered on this subject at this time, which did not involve questions of the most extensive, the most serious, the most lasting importance to the people of Great Britain—to the very being of the state. He would confess, that in one respect he had changed his opinion on this subject, and he was not ashamed to own it: he retained his opinion of the propriety of a parliamentary reform, if it could be obtained by a general concurrence, pointing harmlessly at its object: but he was afraid at this moment, that if agreed to by that house, the security of all the blessings we enjoyed would be shaken to the foundation. The present, he asserted, was not a time to make hazardous experiments. Could we forget what lessons had been given to the world within a few years? Could it be supposed that men felt the situation of this country, as contrasted with that of others, to be deplorable? He then noticed the association of the friends of the people, and its advertisements, inviting the public to join the standard of reform: he saw with concern the gentlemen to whom he alluded, united with others, who professed, not reform only, but direct hostility to the very nature of our government; who threatened the extinction of monarchy, hereditary succession, and every thing which promoted order and subordination in a state. To his last hour he would resist every attempt of this nature; and if he was called on either to hazard our safety, or abandon for ever all hopes of reform; he would say, that he had no hesitation in preferring the latter alternative.

Mr. Fox, in allusion to the loud applause with which the minister's declaration was received, said that he felt additional difficulty in delivering his sentiments: he was aware that the subject of parliamentary reform was completely unpopular within these walls; but he believed that the public regarded it in a very different light; and unless something were done to quiet the minds of the people, there would be a difficulty in preserving internal tranquillity for any considerable time. He reminded the house, that he had never professed to be so



sanguine on this subject as the right honorable gentleman ; but although less sanguine, he happened to be a little more consistent ; for he had, early in public life, formed an opinion of the necessity of parliamentary reform, and he still remained convinced of that necessity ; and the obvious reason was, that the proceedings of the house were sometimes at variance with public opinion : for the truth and justice of this sentiment, he said, it was only necessary to refer to a recent instance, the Russian armament. The declaration of the house was, that we should proceed to hostilities ; the declaration of the people was, that we should not : and so strong was that declaration, that it silenced and awed the minister with his triumphant majority : nevertheless, the people of England were now paying the expense of an armament, for which they never gave their consent ; and, as far as that goes, they pay their money for not being represented, and because their sentiments are not spoken within the walls of that house. It was the doctrine of implicit confidence in the minister, that disgusted the people ; a confidence, not given to him from experience of his probity and talents, but merely because he was minister ; and whatever calamities he might bring on the country, no inquiry into his conduct would be granted. In reply to Mr. Pitt's observations on the character of several members of the association, he confessed that some of Mr. Grey's allies were infuriated republicans ; but, on the other hand, he maintained, that among Mr. Pitt's friends there were slaves of despotism. Mr. Sheridan, among other arguments in favor of reform, observed, 'that sixty or seventy peerages had been created under the present administration, for no distinguished abilities or public services, but merely for interest in returning members to parliament. Here peerages had been bartered for electioneering interest ; but in the sister kingdom, it had been all but proved that they were put up to auction for money. The minister, failing in his proposition of adding 100 members to the house of commons, had almost added as many to the house of peers.' Mr. Sheridan remarked, 'that an honorable gentleman, Mr. Powys,<sup>19</sup> had called on all who thought as he did to protest against the measure : in this he had done wisely, for to protest was easier than to argue.' The consternation of ministers evidently appeared by a royal proclamation, almost immediately issued against the public dispersion of seditious

<sup>19</sup> He was himself soon afterwards called to the upper house by the title of lord Lilford.



writings, and against all illegal correspondence; exhorting the magistrates to vigilance, and the people to submission and obedience. This being laid before the house on the twenty-fifth of May, and an address moved of approbation and support, it was warmly opposed by Mr. Grey, and the proclamation itself condemned in severe terms, as a pernicious and insidious measure, designed to make a separation between those who had long acted together, and among whom there was known to exist a difference of opinion respecting the present state of the country; though the union of this party was essential to the maintenance of the constitution in purity and perfection. No man, he said, was ever more delighted with such sinister practices than the right honorable gentleman, whose policy was a constant tissue of inconsistency, of assertion and retractation; who never proposed a measure without intending to delude his hearers; who promised every thing, and performed nothing; who never kept his word with the people; who studied all the arts of captivating popularity without even intending to deserve it; and who, from the first step of his political life, was a complete public apostate. He remarked, as one of the objects of this proclamation, 'that the king's officers, commissioners of the peace, and magistrates, were enjoined to make diligent inquiry, in order to discover the authors and publishers of wicked and seditious writings: in other words, a system of espionage was to be established by order of the crown: the very idea was surprising as well as odious, that a proclamation should issue from the sovereign of a free people, commanding such a system to be supported by spies and informers.' Mr. Fox was scarcely less violent against the minister, or in his reprobation of the proclamation and address.

Mr. Pitt declared that no invective should ever deter him from pursuing that line of conduct which he deemed most conducive to public tranquillity, and the preservation of constitutional freedom: he expressed his respect for many of the members of the association in question, from whom he differed chiefly in regard to the time and mode which they had adopted for the attainment of their object. 'The society of the friends of the people,' he said, 'need not come within the scope of the proclamation, which was levelled against the daring and seditious principles that had been so insidiously propagated amongst the people, under the plausible and delusive appellation of the Rights of Man.' He expressed his astonishment, that the existence of a republican spirit in this kingdom had



been denied, when it was openly avowed and industriously propagated both by individuals and societies; and he declared, that Mr. Fox, by the arguments which he had that day used, was certainly a friend, if not an advocate, of Mr. Paine and his doctrines: such conduct appeared to him irreconcilable with any spark of patriotism, or any regard for the established form of government. It was scarcely credible, that a man should seriously maintain that there was no ground for alarm, or cause for the proclamation; when it was known, that numerous clubs, in the manufacturing towns and districts, had adopted, and were eagerly spreading opinions, which, if not checked in time, would undermine and overthrow the constitution.

Several opposition members, particularly the marquis of Titchfield, lord North, Mr. Windham, Mr. Anstruther, and Mr. T. Grenville, delivered their sentiments in favor of the address; and the last of these gentlemen asserted, that writings of a seditious nature had been circulated among our soldiers and sailors. They all acknowledged their conviction, that the doctrines lately propagated, and the conduct pursued, by clubs and societies, demanded the vigorous interposition of government, if it would avert from this country the evils experienced by France from similar beginnings. The address was finally carried without a division. In the upper house, as soon as a motion for the concurrence of their lordships was made and seconded, the prince of Wales rose for the first time, to deliver his sentiments among the peers. 'Having been educated in principles which taught him to revere that constitutional liberty of the people on which their happiness depended, to those principles he would give his firm and constant support. The matter at issue appeared to be, whether the constitution was or was not to be maintained; whether the wild notions of untried theory were to conquer the wholesome maxims of established practice; and whether those laws, under which we had flourished for so long a series of years, were to be subverted by a pretended reform, which the people would not sanction. As a person nearly and dearly interested in the happiness of the people, he should feel it treason against his own principles if he did not declare his disapprobation of those seditious publications which had occasioned the present motion: on this great and solid basis then, he should vote for a concurrence with the commons in their wise and salutary address.'

Lord Grenville, in the course of the debate, observed that



such a testimony from his royal highness of regard to the constitution, and zeal for the welfare of the people, must warm the breast of every Englishman who heard it; and was the strongest assurance to the people at large, that they might expect a continuance of those essential blessings, which they had enjoyed since the accession of the present illustrious family to the throne of these realms.

The address was supported by the duke of Portland, lords Spencer and Rawdon, with several other opposition members; an amendment, moved by lord Lauderdale, and seconded by lord Lansdowne, being rejected without a division: it was followed by addresses from all parts of the kingdom; and the ministry, perceiving their strength, commenced prosecutions against many offenders, amongst whom Thomas Paine stood most conspicuous: he was found guilty of the charge; but, foreseeing the probability of this event, he had eluded punishment by absconding to France, where he was elected a member of the national convention.

Great complaints very generally and justly prevailed at this time respecting the police of London, where the materials of depredation are more numerous and accessible, while the practicability of plunder is greater than in any other city of the world. Many rules and ordinances had been enacted at different periods, but had experimentally proved unequal to the ends proposed, for want of sufficient power in the magistracy and its agents to discover and suppress, in a summary and expeditious manner, whatever had a visible tendency to disturb the public peace. To rectify this defect, a bill was introduced into the lower house, with the concurrence and approbation of government, by which public offices were to be established, at a convenient distance from each other, for the prompt administration of such parts of our law as come within the cognisance of justices of the peace. Three magistrates were to sit in each of these offices, with a salary of £300 to each: they were to be prohibited from taking fees individually; and the money arising from fees paid into all the offices, was to be applied to the disbursement of salaries and official expenses. That the law might have a preventive as well as a penal operation, a clause was inserted, vesting in constables authority to apprehend persons who did not give a satisfactory account of themselves, and empowering the justices to commit them as vagabonds. Various objections were made to this bill, as intrenching on the liberty of the subject, and increasing the power of the crown; but, on investigation, the necessity of it



was found so strong, as to overrule the arguments of its opponents ; and it was passed by a considerable majority.

While these measures were taken to secure the innocent and industrious against the profligate and atrocious, lord Rawdon resumed his generous efforts to relieve the unfortunate, by a revision of the laws regarding debtor and creditor : his object was to compel the former to give up all he possessed ; and to prevent the latter, after such a cession, from gratifying a malignant disposition by keeping a fellow creature in perpetual imprisonment. As the subject was of great importance, and required a full discussion of principles ; his lordship was prevailed on to postpone its introduction till the following session, by which time it might be maturely weighed.

The slave trade again occupied the attention of parliament ; no fewer than 508 petitions, praying for the abolition of that abominable traffic, having been presented to the house of commons in the early part of the present session. On the second of April, Mr. Wilberforce brought forward a motion to this effect in a committee of the whole house, where the abolitionists succeeded in the main question, though they were divided as to the time when the suppression should take place. Mr. Pitt, in a powerful and luminous speech, supported the mover in his plea for immediate abolition ; asking why injustice was to be suffered to remain for a single hour ? and, having entered at great length into the effect which the abolition would produce on the real interests of proprietors in the West Indies, the condition of the negroes, and the safety of the islands ; he showed that all the arguments drawn from these sources pleaded strongly for an immediate, rather than a gradual operation. ‘The origin of evil,’ he observed, in answer to those who had been led to place slavery in the rank of necessary evils, ‘is, indeed, beyond the reach of human understanding ; and the permission of it by the Supreme Being is a subject, into which we are not concerned to inquire : but where the evil in question is a moral evil, which a man can scrutinise, and where that moral evil has its origin within ourselves ; let us not imagine that we can clear our consciences by this general, not to say, irreligious way of putting aside the question.’ Nor did Mr. Pitt forget to urge on the house the influence which their decision would produce in other countries ; or the prospect of a divine blessing to be drawn down on their own, by their exertions in so righteous a cause. Such were the opinions held by the minister respecting the abolition of slavery ; but neither at this, nor at any other time, did he make it a cabinet question ; contenting himself



with speaking and giving his individual vote against it, while he left all other members of administration to follow that line, which their own notions of policy, expediency, or right might dictate.

Mr. Pitt's eloquent and persuasive speech was received with the loudest applauses; but he failed in his main object, immediate abolition; and though a motion made by Mr. Jenkinson, to introduce a plan for improving the treatment of slaves,<sup>20</sup> was rejected, yet Mr. Wilberforce's resolution was not passed without the insertion of an amendment proposed by Mr. Dundas, making the abolition gradual. Mr. Wilberforce, however, having informed the house that he could not conscientiously bring in a bill on that principle, threw it wholly into the hands of Mr. Dundas; who, on the twenty-third of April, made a motion, embodying twelve resolutions, one of which fixed the first of January, 1800, as the day on which the importation of slaves should cease: an amendment by lord Mornington, that 1793 should be substituted for 1800, was lost; as also another, proposing that the trade should cease in 1795. On this occasion, Mr. Pitt consoled himself with thinking that the house had declared its opinion of this traffic; that all parties had concurred in reprobating it; and that even its advocates had been compelled to acknowledge its infamy: he declared there was not the slightest cause for apprehending that the plantations would not be in a fit state to carry on business, without fresh importations, in the year 1795, or in 1794, or even in 1793: as, however, the case was viewed by a majority of the house very much as a commercial concern, an amendment proposed by Sir Edward Knatchbull, fixing the abolition to the first of January, 1796, was carried by 151 against 132; on which, Mr. Dundas, following the example of Mr. Wilberforce, declined any farther interference in the business.

In this state of the question, it was taken up by Mr. Pitt; who, being anxious that the abolition should take place at any period rather than none, undertook to bring in a bill; and on the second of May moved five of Mr. Dundas's resolutions, with modifications and amendments: these passed without opposition; and being, at Mr. Pitt's earnest desire, reported that night, were communicated to the lords at a conference next day, with copies of all the information received by the house

<sup>20</sup> By means of which, he asserted, they would become more and more prolific, so that in a short time no importation would be required.



of commons. The object of this haste was, that a bill might be introduced as soon as possible, with the concurrence of both houses. On the eighth of May, when this question came under consideration, lord Stormont, who was adverse to the resolutions, made a motion for calling witnesses to the bar of the lords; as it would be derogatory to their dignity to rely solely on documents received from the other house. The reasonableness of hearing evidence could not be denied: but lord Grenville, who was a zealous advocate in the cause of abolition, proposed, for the sake of expedition, that the examination should be conducted by a committee: this amendment was opposed by the lord chancellor and several other peers adverse to the resolutions; and the duke of Clarence, under whose reign the abolition of slave *labor* has taken place, opposed the abolition of the *trade* in a very able, comprehensive, and impressive speech; rejecting all theories, and arguing from facts and experience in favor of what he considered to be political and commercial expediency. Lord Grenville's amendment being negatived by a large majority, the original motion passed, and the examination of witnesses at the bar commenced: little progress, however, was made in it before the prorogation; as the time of the house was much occupied with the trial of Warren Hastings, and other public business; so that the introduction of the bill was necessarily postponed to the next session. On the nineteenth of March, a bill introduced by Mr. Pitt, encouraging the growth of timber for the navy, and improving the royal revenue arising out of the New Forest, by the sale of certain parts, and the enfranchisement of copyholds, passed the house of commons without much difficulty; but it met with a very decided opposition in the upper house at the second reading, especially from the chancellor: his lordship objected to the principle of this bill, as favoring the alienation of the crown lands; on which ground he severely censured the reports of the commissioners, on which it was founded: he asserted, that it was essential to the safety of the constitution, that the sovereign should have his interests blended with those of the landed property in the country: and although it was considered that the reflections which he cast on the advisers of the measure were directed against Mr. Pitt, yet the validity of his objections seemed to be admitted; for notwithstanding the commitment of the bill was carried by a majority of forty-one to twenty-nine, it was postponed, and never afterwards resumed; other means being adopted for promoting the growth of timber.



Parliament was prorogued on the sixteenth of June; and the king, in his speech, lamented the commencement of hostilities on the continent, but declared that his principal care should be to maintain that harmony which at present subsisted between himself and the belligerent powers. The extraordinary manner in which lord Thurlow had, in several instances, opposed the minister,<sup>1</sup> and his perseverance in taking every opportunity to mark his personal dislike to Mr. Pitt, necessarily led to dismissal from his high office, and the great seal was put into commission; but this event was not followed by a single resignation or change in any political or legal department. By the death of lord Guildford on the fifth of August, the wardenship of the cinque ports, worth about £3000 a year, became vacant; when his majesty offered it to Mr. Pitt in such gracious and pressing terms, that to decline it was impossible: nor did the minister, who had been for nine years employing his time and thoughts to promote his country's interests, and who had exhibited the strongest marks of disinterested patriotism, subject himself to the slightest imputation by acceding to his majesty's wishes.

In the autumn of this year, all England was in a ferment, created by speculations in canal shares; to promote which, many new canals were undertaken, and incredible sums subscribed, principally by persons in the midland counties: before the end of the year, however, owing to political alarms, shares, which had acquired enormous premiums, fell to a twentieth, and some to a hundredth, of their previous price; by which multitudes were ruined: but among the domestic events of Great Britain, the exemplary instance of national charity towards the unfortunate French emigrants ought not to be forgotten. One of the first enormities of the revolutionists was the murder of a large proportion of their clergy, and the banishment of almost all the remainder: some thousands of those unhappy exiles found refuge in England, where a private subscription of £33,775 was immediately made for them: when this was exhausted, a second was collected under the auspices of his majesty, which amounted to £41,304; while the secret beneficence of individuals con-

<sup>1</sup> It was the hazard of encountering his opposition in the house of lords, that induced Mr. Pitt to apply to his majesty to advance Mr. William Grenville to the peerage; he agreeing to conduct the public business in the upper house. See Tomline, vol. iii. p. 401.



tributed large sums to their relief:<sup>2</sup> the management of these funds was entrusted to a committee, of which Mr. Wilmot, one of the members for the city of Coventry, was president: on him the burden of the trust almost wholly fell; and his humanity, judgment, and perseverance intitled him to the highest praise. So numerous were these unfortunate exiles, and so destitute their condition, that they were long unable to procure proper clothes; while those which they had taken up as a disguise, when they were hunted down in France, exposed them to the derision, instead of the compassion of the populace: so suddenly had they been expelled from their country, that few had brought with them those devotional books, which had been the companions of their former life, and were to be the comfort of their future: to relieve them from this calamity, the university of Oxford printed for them, at her sole expense, 2000 copies of the New Testament according to the Latin Vulgate; to which 2000 more were added by the munificence of the marquis of Buckingham. When the wants of these sufferers exceeded the measure of private bounty, government took them under its protection; and though engaged in the most expensive war that any country ever waged, appropriated a monthly allowance of £8000 to their support, with the approbation of the whole nation:—an instance of splendid and systematic liberality, of which the annals of the world do not furnish another example.

As the war in the East Indies was concluded this year, it will be expedient to take a brief review of our affairs in that quarter of the world since the appointment of lord Cornwallis to the office of governor-general. In September, 1786, his lordship arrived at Calcutta, furnished with an extensive code of instructions, the joint production of the board of control and the court of directors; vested also with enlarged powers conferred on him by the new act of parliament. His attention was in the first instance engaged by the state of our connexion with the nabob of Oude, who complained bitterly of the pecuniary burdens to which he had been subjected. It appeared that, during the nine years preceding, he had paid to the company, under various claims, eighty-four lacs of rupees per annum; a sum vastly superior in amount to what he had bound himself to pay by the treaties of 1775 and 1781: but it was now agreed, that an annual payment of fifty lacs should embrace

<sup>2</sup> These contributions were exclusive of those granted for the relief of the lay emigrants.



every claim ; and his lordship expressed his conviction, that this would not only indemnify the company for all the expenses to which they might be liable from their connexion with the vizir, but that the prince himself had the means of making this annual disbursement without suffering in his convenience or dignity : his lordship, besides, promised to relieve him by recalling a part of the British troops from his dominions whenever policy should warrant such a measure : the defence of his country was undertaken by the British government, while the internal administration of affairs was left to his own exclusive management ; though the governor did not preclude himself from making representations on the subject of his administration whenever it might be essentially necessary : in the mean time, his lordship, aware of the character of Asuph u Dowla, gave a decided support to the minister, Hyder Beg khan, who was favorable to the connexion subsisting between Great Britain and the states of India ; assuring him, that he might rely on the English government, as long as he served his master with fidelity, governed the country with equity, and adhered to the engagements formed with the honorable company.

The instructions given to lord Cornwallis by the court of directors coincided fully with a clause in the new act of the legislature, declaring, ‘ that to pursue schemes of conquest and extension of dominion in India, are measures repugnant to the wish, the honor, and the policy of Great Britain.’ It was farther made unlawful for the supreme government to engage in hostilities with any state, that had not commenced, or prepared to commence, war on us, or an ally whom we had engaged to protect ; unless in cases where the previous sanction of the government in England had been obtained. The local government also was prohibited from making any treaty which went to guaranty the possessions of a native prince, except in cases where such party had engaged to aid the English in a war actually commenced, or about to commence. The observations made by Sir John Malcolm on this subject are so conducive to a right understanding of Indian affairs, that they cannot with propriety be omitted.

‘ The spirit and object,’ says he, ‘ of these laws was just and wise ; for the great danger we had to encounter, from the very first, was a too rapid extension of our empire ; but our success in retarding, if we could not arrest, the growth of our greatness, evidently depended on the means we employed for this purpose ; and the letter of the act in question went to fetter our government in the exercise of the most essential of these



means : it forbade the seasonable use of that power and influence which we possessed, to check combination, or to counteract, while yet immature, the plans of ambition ; prescribing to a state situated among despotic princes, who recognised no objects but conquest and power, a course of policy, which they could not appreciate, or even understand. These princes were consequently liable, from their ignorance and presumption, to mistake our motives of action ; to think that moderation and forbearance were fear and weakness ; and, under that delusion, to venture on a course which precipitated their ruin, and rendered our cautious and unwise policy productive of those very ends which it had been framed to avoid.<sup>3</sup> ‘Lord Cornwallis,’ says the admirable writer above quoted, ‘had in his character a union of firmness and moderation, which gave the best promise of preserving peace with the native states, had that been possible : the aggression of Tippoo Sultaun, however, forced him into a war.’

Of all the native princes, Tippoo was most formidable to the British government, and most active in disturbing its authority and counteracting its interests. The peace of 1784 had, it was supposed, secured his fidelity by very feeble ties ; and the splendid embassy which he soon afterwards despatched to France, afforded reason to suspect that some plan was in agitation between the old government of that country, and the Mysorean tyrant, against the British power : this, however, was defeated by the same cause which prevented a war with Spain ;—the breaking out of the French revolution.

Lord Cornwallis had carried with him explicit orders to demand from the Nizam the surrender of the circar of Guntoor, the reversion of which, in consequence of the death of Basalut Jung in 1782, devolved on the company : it was not, however, till 1788, that affairs presented a favorable opportunity of pressing this demand ; when the Nizam, on account of the unfortunate issue of a recent contest with Tippoo, was desirous of renewing his connexion with the company ; and not only surrendered the circar, but by a letter, dated July 1, 1789, explanatory of the treaty of 1768, covertly concluded an offensive alliance against the sultan. A subsidiary force was to be granted to the Nizam, on his requisition, provided it did not act against the powers in alliance with the company, from the list of whom Tippoo’s name alone was excluded. The real character of this alliance did not escape the observation of

<sup>3</sup> Political History of India, vol. ii. p. 50.



the Mysorean prince; and it is evident that lord Cornwallis must have thought that an early war with him was inevitable. Symptoms indeed of hostile designs, on the side of Mysore, had already manifested themselves; for early in the preceding year, Tippoo had descended the Ghauts at the head of an army; and, advancing to Coimbetoor and Dindigul, laid waste with fire and sword such of the polygars dependent on them, as had recently failed in allegiance: at this time, the rajah of Travancore communicated to the Madras government his apprehension of being invaded at once from the east and the north, in consequence of the minute investigation which had been made of the routes on each of those frontiers.

In the following January, a simultaneous rebellion in Coorg and Malabar recalled Tippoo into those provinces; and the Nairs, having been enclosed by detachments of his troops, were offered the alternative of a voluntary profession of Mahometanism, or a forcible conversion to that faith, with deportation from their native land. So terrible was this idea, that vast numbers, incessantly hunted out of their places of concealment, came forward to be circumcised, in order to escape a more cruel fate.<sup>4</sup> On his return to Coimbetoor, on account of the rains, the tyrant left six divisions of his army in Malabar, with distinct establishments of civil, military, and spiritual officers, charged with surveying the lands, numbering the productive trees, and converting the remaining Nairs: besides, while at Coimbetoor, he made a farther augmentation of his infantry, preparatory to the war which he undoubtedly meditated.

Tippoo was very anxious to achieve the conquest of Travancore, without appearing as a principal in the contest: he had, in 1788, agreed with the zamorin of Calicut, to restore to him a portion of his former possessions, on condition of his invading Travancore for the sultan, but in his own name, under a pretext of certain antiquated claims: this project, however, was foiled by Tippoo's precipitation in beginning the work of universal circumcision, which the zamorin resented, and joined in the general insurrection. The sultan now wished to make the rajah of Cochin an instrument to effect the same object; and the president of the Madras government frankly commu-

<sup>4</sup> Tippoo, in his account of this crusade, took credit to himself for having destroyed 8000 idol temples, many of them roofed with gold, silver, or copper, and all containing treasures buried at the feet of the idol.



nicated to him, in 1789, the fears and representations of the rajah of Travancore ; adding, that any attack on that ally of the English would be considered as equivalent to a declaration of war. Tippoo's answer stated, that the interposition of his dependent, the rajah of Cochin, prevented the possibility of collision between him and Travancore.

This latter principality was defended on the north by a double line of works, beyond which lay part of the territory of the rajah of Cochin ; though a considerable portion of that country, including the capital, was blended, on the southern side, with Travancore. These lines were more imposing than strong ; as, in their whole extent of thirty miles, only a few points were closed in the rear, and those imperfectly ; so that nearly the whole would fall if a single point were carried. Some time after their construction, Hyder Ali, who was extending his conquests over the Malabar chiefs, carried his arms against the Cochin territory without the wall ; and the rajah, rather than lose that portion of his dominions, consented to become Hyder's tributary.

It is also necessary to observe, that part of these lines were on a strip of land, which had been ceded to the Travancore rajah by the chief of Cochin, in recompense for aid afforded to him in repelling an invasion of the zamorin of Calicut in 1761 : they were also continued across the island of Vipeen, in the rear of the Dutch fort of Ayacotta, and on ground purchased of the Dutch by the rajah of Travancore.

Tippoo now instructed his tributary rajah to demand back those districts of Cochin which had been ceded to Travancore, and promised him military aid to enforce the claim ; at the same time, he declared to the Madras government, that the lines, by intersecting the country of his tributary, were virtually built on his own territory, and excluded him from visiting his dominions on each side of the wall. To obviate this difficulty, the rajah of Travancore renewed a long-pending negociation with the Dutch for the purchase of Cranganore and Ayacotta, possessions situated within Cochin, but obtained, a century before, by conquest from the Portuguese. The validity of this purchase being contested by Tippoo, on the score of an antiquated claim ; the Madras government, with its usual fatuity, countenanced the pretext, and despatched a messenger, ordering the rajah to annul the contract, and restore those places to the Dutch, although the sultan had himself recognised a right of sale, by offering a much larger sum in order to obtain them : it also lent its authority to another of his alleged grievances,



by requiring the Travancore rajah to discontinue his protection to the fugitive Nairs, who sought refuge in his dominions. Lord Cornwallis, being informed of these proceedings, directed that proposals should be sent to Tippoo for the appointment of commissioners on each side to try the points in dispute: at the same time, he declared, that the first attack made by the sultan on any part of the territory of Travancore or Arcot, should place him in a state of war.

In May, 1789, Tippoo, having again descended to the coast, sent a summons to the fort of Cranganore, and the rajah prepared to join the Dutch in its defence; but after several demonstrations, he retired, and placed his troops at Palaghautcherry and Coimbetoor. In December he again advanced, and sent a *vakeel* to the rajah, announcing his demands; but his claims being denied, he approached the lines, and began to erect batteries. On the morning of the twenty-ninth, he penetrated them by the right flank, and introduced a portion of his troops within the wall; but before he could arrive at the gate, which it was his object to open, and through which he expected to admit the rest of his army, his troops were thrown into confusion by an unexpected resistance, and fled in confusion; Tippoo himself being overturned with his palanquin in the ditch, and not escaping without a severe contusion.

Lord Cornwallis, having received notice of these events, ordered the Madras government to exact from the sultan full restitution for this wanton violation of treaty; and being relieved from all previous restrictions, he hastened to secure, by an offensive and defensive alliance, the co-operation of the Nizam: nor was it long before he concluded a similar treaty with the Mahratta court of Poonah.

In the mean time, Tippoo sent letters to the Madras government, disavowing the outrage, and ascribing it to the unauthorised proceedings of his army: he also made professions of the most ardent friendship for the British; all of which were so credulously received as proofs of a pacific disposition, that the orders of the governor-general to adopt energetic measures were neglected; and Tippoo, having renewed his operations, soon made himself master of the lines, and obtained possession of Cranganore: the troops of the rajah then fled in all directions, the lines were rased, and the northern district of Travancore was ravaged without mercy, until Tippoo was recalled to the defence of his own dominions, about the end of May.



The first operations of the British troops against Mysore were baffled by the sultan's activity, who attacked them in detail, as they advanced in three divisions; broke through their line of communication; and ultimately compelled them to abandon their plan of the campaign. For this success he was chiefly indebted to his superior system of intelligence, which never failed him. The war was transferred from Mysore to the Carnatic; but the whole of Malabar was wrested from the sultan by another British division, and placed under the dominion of the company.

In February, 1791, lord Cornwallis, putting himself at the head of the army, entered Mysore by the pass of Mooglee, and reached Bangalore with little opposition on the fifth of March.

On the same day, colonel Floyd, being despatched with part of the cavalry to reconnoitre, was tempted to attack Tippoo's rear, which at first appeared to give way; but being quickly re-inforced, soon rallied, and compelled the colonel to retreat: on the following day, the *pettah*, or town, was stormed, with the loss of 100 men: on the twelfth, three batteries were opened on the citadel, but they were too distant to effect a breach: on the sixteenth, therefore, a new battery of nine guns was opened at the distance of 550 yards from the works; and on the twenty-first, the fort was stormed and taken, with little loss to the British, but with a dreadful carnage of the garrison: not less than 1000 men were massacred with the bayonet; and 300, mostly wounded, were taken prisoners.

The fate of the campaign, and perhaps of the war, was decided by this blow. The evil consequences of a failure it is difficult to estimate; for the forage and grain found in the town had been long consumed; and that in the country around had all been destroyed: 'even the resource,' says colonel Wilks, 'of digging for the roots of grass within the limits of the piquets, had been so exhausted, that scarcely a fibre remained.' The most favourable result of raising the siege under these circumstances would have been a retreat, with the loss of the artillery, and pressed by all the energy with which such an event would have animated the foe. On the twenty-eighth, lord Cornwallis proceeded northward, to effect a junction with the Nizam's cavalry; the cattle being reduced to skeletons, and scarcely able to move their own weight. After being deceived by false intelligence, returning southward, and again retracing his steps in a northerly direction, he was met by his allies, in number about 10,000, well-mounted horsemen, who were expected to



do good service in performing the duties of light troops : but they soon showed themselves worthless soldiers, unequal to the protection of their own foragers on ordinary occasions ; so that, by consuming grain, they augmented the distress of the army, without affording it the slightest advantage.

On the thirteenth of May, the British troops reached Arikeram, about nine miles from the capital ; where Tippoo, who had taken up a strong position six miles in their front, was brought to action and defeated : but the precipitation of lord Cornwallis, in pushing forward with imperfect equipments and deficient supplies, in spite of incessant rains and defective intelligence, had again nearly led to the destruction of his army, which was sadly wasted by disease and famine. After all the fatigue and misery, and loss of life incurred, it was discovered, that not a single operation could be attempted ; that the battering train must be destroyed, and a retreat instantly commenced : at the same time, orders were despatched to general Abercromby, who was advancing from the west, to return to Malabar ; when a similar destruction of his heavy guns and equipments became necessary.

Scarcely had the troops under lord Cornwallis begun this melancholy retreat, than they were most unexpectedly joined by the Mahrattas under two Poonah chiefs, Hurry Punt and Purseram Bhow, bringing provisions and draught cattle. Not a suspicion had existed among the British of the existence of a Mahratta army within 150 miles of their march, although intelligence of their movements had been constantly despatched by messengers during the whole of their advance ; so completely had Tippoo's light troops succeeded in cutting off all communication. The Mahrattas had ostensibly taken the field at the same period as the English ; but their primary object being to recover the punjab of Krishna, they diverged, for the purpose of attacking Darwar, its capital ; by the siege of which they were long detained : after this, they proceeded to the conquest of the country north of the Toombuddra : their tardy arrival was the chief cause of the disasters attending the British army ; for if lord Cornwallis had possessed, a few days sooner, information of their approach, the campaign would have assumed a very different character. As the loss of the battering train, the return of general Abercromby, and the state of the season, forbade their undertaking the siege of Seringapatam, the combined army, on the sixth of June, began to fall back on Bangalore ; and in their way the strong hill-fort of Hooliordroog was taken and dismantled. It now



became necessary that the allied troops should separate during the inactive season : Hurry Punt alone remained with the English, who proceeded towards the south-east, for the purpose of opening a communication, by the Policade pass, with the Carnatic : Tippoo's garrison evacuated Oossoor at their approach ; Rayacottah, one of the strongest of his fortresses, surrendered ; and the rest of the forts which defended the pass, either obeyed the summons, or made a very feeble resistance. By this newly-opened route, a convoy, such as scarcely had ever been seen even in India, joined the army : it consisted of 100 elephants loaded with treasure, marching two abreast, with the British standard displayed ; 6000 bullocks<sup>s</sup> with rice ; 100 carts with arrack ; and several hundreds of coolies with other supplies.

While the army remained at Oossoor, Tippoo sent a *vakeel*, with offers to negotiate ; but as he was commissioned to treat only with principals, and lord Cornwallis declined to meet an agent, he was sent back, without having been permitted to enter the camp. The remaining operations of the campaign consisted of the reduction of the formidable hill-forts of Nundydroog, Savendroog, Ootradroog, and some others : the first of these, built on the summit of a granite rock about 1700 feet in height, was quite inaccessible on three of its faces ; and the only part which could be ascended was fortified by two strong walls, and an outwork which covered the gateway and yielded a flanking fire : against this place batteries were erected after fourteen days of severe labor ; and two breaches being effected, it was stormed and gallantly carried, with the loss of only two men killed, and twenty-eight wounded, chiefly by huge stones hurled down the rock : but Savendroog, situated in the woody hills extending from the vicinity of Bangalore to the river Madoor, was deemed impregnable ; and from the insalubrity of the impenetrable woods and thickets with which it is surrounded, it took its name ; which signifies ' The Rock of Death.' The enormous mass of granite on which the fortifications had been constructed, is much higher than Nundydroog, and rises from a base at least eight miles in circumference, apparently inaccessible from below on all sides : at the height of about two thirds of its total elevation, a chasm divides it into two distinct fortresses, each abundantly supplied with water : yet, after the immense labor of cutting a way through the strong jungle, and of dragging the heavy artillery over the intervening

<sup>s</sup> Nearly 40,000 bullocks had been lost in the last campaign.



rocks and hills, both these aerial citadels were carried within one hour from the commencement of the assault, with a very moderate list of casualties, and without the loss of a single life in the assault itself. Ootradroog, a fortress of a similar description, was in like manner carried by escalade, without the loss of a single man; though many parts of the ascent were so steep, that a few resolute fellows might have defended it against any attack: the forts of Ramgherry and Sevengherry surrendered after a very slight resistance; and Hooliordroog, which had been re-occupied and repaired by the enemy, was retaken, and held as a post of communication. During these proceedings, the only advantages gained by Tippoo consisted in the recovery of Coimbetoor, and a few successful attacks made against the Mahrattas, under Purseram Bhow.

At length, being joined by the Hyderabad and Poonah contingencies, lord Cornwallis began his march towards Seringapatam, on the first of February, 1792; and on the fifth he took a position across the valley of Milgotah, about six miles from the capital; under the walls of which the sultan's army awaited his approach. Seringapatam is situated on an island formed by two branches of the river Cavery: around it ran the usual hedge, called 'the bound hedge,' composed of immense shrubs of the prickly-pear, bamboos, &c. which formed a rampart of no inconsiderable strength. On the northern side, where the confederate army had taken up their ground, an oblong space, about three miles long, and from half a mile to a mile broad, was enclosed between the hedge and the river; and there Tippoo lay encamped on very commanding ground, the natural strength of which was increased by six large redoubts; one of which, at the western extremity, called the Mosque redoubt, was a post of great importance, covering the left of the encampment; the right being defended by fortifications on a hill called the Carrighaut, at the base of which a branch of the river Lockany enters the Cavery. At the western angle of the island rose the strong fortress of Seringapatam; the eastern part, where was the palace and beautiful gardens of Tippoo, being fortified by redoubts and batteries: thus the fort and island became, as it were, a second line of defence, or the body of a place behind its outworks. Heavy cannon in the redoubts, and a well-disposed field train of 100 pieces, defended the first line; and at least 300 more were advantageously placed in the fort and island. Tippoo's army amounted to 5000 cavalry and above 40,000 infantry: he commanded the centre and right of the line in person, and had



his tent pitched near the most easterly of the six redoubts, which on that account was named the sultan's redoubt. Unable to keep the field against the powerful combination of his foes, he hoped that, by concentrating his forces within these strong defences, he might be able to protract the war, until disease, and the want of supplies in a country totally exhausted, should compel his enemies to retreat.

The British commander did not suffer his troops to enjoy a long repose in this position; for on the evening of the sixth, just after they had been dismissed from parade, they were directed to fall in again with their arms and ammunition: every thing was properly disposed at half-past eight o'clock, when the order was given to march; and as celerity was of the utmost consequence, and guns could be of little service in the dark, it was resolved that none should be employed. The right division, consisting of 3300 infantry, was commanded by general Meadows; the centre, consisting of 3700, by lord Cornwallis in person; and the left, which only amounted to 1700, by lieutenant-colonel Maxwell. The evening was perfectly serene; and the troops were moving on by the moon's light in awful silence, when the centre column, within a mile of the bound hedge, fell in with the enemy's grand guard, or body of cavalry, coming to disturb the British camp: finding themselves discovered, the column pushed on with uncommon speed; and entered the lines in less than a quarter of an hour after intelligence of their advance reached the sultan. Tippoo, who had just finished his evening's repast, mounted his charger, and perceived not only a vast mass of fugitives, but also an extended column passing through his camp, and pointing directly to the main ford: as this threatened his retreat, he went off with great rapidity; and had barely time to cross before the English, and to take shelter in the fort. During the retreat, an immense number of his troops deserted; among whom was a corps 10,000 strong, consisting of those whom he had forcibly removed from Coorg. The right column met with greater obstructions; for being led to a more distant point than was intended by lord Cornwallis, it was considerably later in reaching the hedge: the battle, however, became general throughout the enemy's lines about eleven, and continued till daybreak; when the British had completely broken up the sultan's position, and obtained other signal advantages. The contest was continued in various parts during the whole of the seventh; when the guns of the fort, which had been kept silent during the night, opened on the



assailants wherever they could be reached. The most desperate conflict took place at the sultan's redoubt, which was defended by a small party under major Kelly, against three vigorous attacks, seconded by a heavy cannonade from the fort. A considerable force advanced, about five in the evening, to dislodge the British troops from the island, but was repulsed; and the night passed without any alarm, while the enemy's troops were withdrawn from the redoubts. On the morning of the eighth, the remains of his army were collected; the infantry, within the works of the fort; the cavalry and baggage, on the south side of the river, towards Mysore.

Arrangements were now made for besieging the fort, which, with its works, occupied the space of one mile: its two longest sides were defended by the river, which is both deep and broad: the northern face, towards the island, was covered with strong outworks and two massy ramparts, having flank defences, a deep ditch, drawbridges, and every advantage of modern fortification: on this side, however, it was determined to attack it; and on the eighteenth, trenches were opened at the distance of 1800 yards. In the mean time, general Abercromby had effected a junction with the British army; and such an abundance of supplies was maintained in the camp, as had not been known since the commencement of the war: the soldiers, in high spirits, carried on the operations of the siege, excited by the hope of liberating the survivors of their murdered countrymen; and lord Cornwallis fully calculated on opening his batteries by the first of March. Thus pressed in every quarter; his palace and beautiful gardens in possession of the enemy; his whole power reduced within the narrow limits of a citadel, the defence of which was very doubtful; the hitherto unsubdued spirit of the sultan seems to have given way with his tottering fortunes, and peace on almost any terms was become a desirable object. As a preliminary step towards an accommodation, he released lieutenants Chalmers and Nash, who had been taken prisoners; and, on their departure, presented them with two shawls and 500 rupees. Soon afterwards, he despatched a *vakeel* to the camp of lord Cornwallis to sue for peace, which the British general at last granted on the following severe terms:—first, that the sultan should cede one half of his dominions to the allied powers; secondly, that he should pay three crores and thirty lacs of rupees, to indemnify them for the expenses of the war; thirdly, that he should release all his prisoners; and, fourthly,



should deliver two of his sons as hostages for the due execution of the treaty.

On the twenty-sixth of February, the young princes, each mounted on an elephant richly caparisoned, proceeded from the fort to the British camp, where they were received by lord Cornwallis, in the midst of his staff: the eldest, Abul Kalik, was about ten; the youngest, Mooza-ud-deen, about eight years of age: they were attired in white muslin robes, with red turbans richly decorated; and having been educated from infancy with the utmost care, they manifested all the reserve, politeness, and attention of maturer years. The almost parental kindness with which they were received by the British governor seemed to afford them peculiar satisfaction: some presents were exchanged on both sides; and the whole proceeding exhibited a scene at once novel and interesting to the spectators.

In adjusting the terms of the definitive treaty, when the sultan found that the principality of Coorg was included in the cession, he became almost frantic with rage: during the studied procrastination that ensued, it was observed that extensive repairs in the fort were carried on, and the *vakeels* began to bluster and temporise. By sending his sons as hostages, and advancing a crore of rupees, Tippoo had gained an invaluable portion of time, during which the British troops had suffered greatly from inaction, and the insalubrity of the place: their numbers in the hospitals began to increase in a very alarming degree; many of the materials prepared for the siege had perished; the trenches were so damaged as to require reconstruction; and, as it afterwards appeared, one of the individuals entrusted with the conduct of the joint negotiation had held a secret correspondence with the sultan during the whole period. At this critical moment, if lord Cornwallis had long hesitated as to his line of action, he would probably have been undone; but he fortunately possessed a firm and decisive character: sending off the hostages in the direction of the Carnatic, he ordered the guns to be replaced in the batteries, and preparations immediately commenced for renewing the siege; when Tippoo, alarmed by these prompt measures, consented, on the nineteenth of March, to sign the definitive treaty.

By the concessions now made, the boundary of the Mahrattas was extended to their frontier on the Toombuddra, as it existed in 1779. The share obtained by the Nizam reached from the



Krishna beyond the Penna, including the province of Kurpa, with the forts of Gunjecotah and Cudapa; while the English gained Malabar and Coorg, the province of Dindigul, and Baramahal, which formed 'an iron boundary' to Coromandel. In a military point of view, it was thought that Bangalore, and the districts which connect it with the Ghauts, would have been more valuable to us than Coorg; as they would have formed a complete defence against the sultan's future hostility: but lord Cornwallis was desirous of reconciling the vanquished prince, as far as possible, to his humbled condition; and was also anxious to protect the wretched inhabitants of Coorg, who had shown great zeal and attachment to the English cause, against the horrible vengeance which the tyrant was ready to pour on them as soon as they should come within his power. 'The whole course of his lordship's conduct on this memorable occasion,' as Sir John Malcolm justly observes, 'exhibited a union of good feeling, manly simplicity, and firmness, which added, as much as his victories in the field, to the fame of his country.'

No specific change was made, after the termination of the war, in the relations between the company and the Nizam; though jealousies began to disturb the alliance of the English and Mahrattas, when the latter saw the shield of British power interposed between them and the Nizam, whom they had long destined for their prey: an additional cause of dissatisfaction was the refusal of lord Cornwallis to suffer the British detachment to remain permanently with the army of the peishwah; who, under the pretext of reducing his refractory dependents to obedience, was anxious to employ it against Madhajee Sindia. This chieftain had firmly established his dominion over the Mogul provinces, which the Poonah ministers beheld with great jealousy: he at this time possessed a large and formidable corps of regular infantry under French officers; he had erected founderies and arsenals; and made a larger accumulation of the materials of war than any native prince in India. Sensible, however, as lord Cornwallis was of the formidable increase of his power, he regarded all direct attempts to check it as contrary to the late act of parliament, and therefore unlikely to obtain the approbation of authorities at home. When, however, intelligence arrived in July from Delhi, that the emperor had signified a hope of obtaining, through the exertions of Sindia, some tribute from Bengal, the British resident at Sindia's court was instructed to make a spirited remonstrance against the manner in which he was using his imperial



captive's name, and to caution him against forcing the British government to depart from its pacific system by any rash and unjust demands.

Until the last year of lord Cornwallis's administration, peace subsisted between England and France; a circumstance of great importance in the war against Tippoo, as it enabled the government to call into operation the whole of the British force. In 1793, when accounts were received of the commencement of war with the French republic, Pondicherry was once more attacked by general Sir John Braithwaite, when that and all the other French settlements were soon added to the English possessions. Lord Cornwallis, who had hastened from Bengal for the purpose of directing this service, found it already performed: he therefore set sail in August for England, where he was received in a manner corresponding to his great deserts: in the year previous he had been raised to the dignity of a marquis.



## CHAP. XXXVI.

## GEORGE III. (CONTINUED.)—1792.

State of the public mind in Great Britain during the recess of parliament—Country placed in a condition of defence—Meeting of parliament—King's speech—Debates on the address, &c.—Mr. Fox's motion to send a minister to the French government—Mr. Pitt's speech on resuming his seat—Conference between M. Maret and Mr. Pitt—Correspondence between M. Chauvelin and lord Grenville—M. Chauvelin's letters of credence from the French government rejected—Personal interview refused—Passing of the alien bill—Farther proof of the warlike intentions of France—Matters approach to a crisis—Execution of Louis XVI.—All diplomatic intercourse ceases—King's message to the house of commons—Motion for an address of thanks by Mr. Pitt—Debates on it—Carried without a division—Observations on the necessity of the war—Proceedings of the British government justified by the event—Declaration of war—Reflections thereon—Declaration of war notified to parliament—Addresses—Various motions rejected—Message respecting the Hanoverian troops—The budget, &c.—Traitorous correspondence bill—Army and navy—French application for a negociation unnoticed—Subsidy, &c. to Sardinia—Relief granted to mercantile men—Renewal of the East India company's charter, &c.—Bill to relieve the Roman catholics of Scotland—Board of agriculture established—Hastings's trial—Bill to reform parliament rejected—Affairs of Ireland from 1786 to 1793—First great coalition—Affairs of France to the end of the second campaign.

DURING the recess of parliament a very considerable feeling of disquietude existed in this country. In the early part of the year, both the navy and army had been reduced, in pursuance of a recommendation from the throne; and the government had resisted the most urgent solicitations to join the confederacy against France: even after the deposition of Louis on the tenth of August, our ambassador was ordered, before he left a capital where monarchy was virtually extinct, to renew his assurances of British neutrality; and the French minister,



M. le Brun, declared that his government felt confident 'that the British cabinet would not, at this decisive moment, depart from the justice, moderation, and impartiality which it had hitherto manifested :<sup>6</sup> but when the national convention began to hold out the hand of fraternity to other countries, their proceedings naturally excited suspicion ; and this feeling was heightened into aversion when they endeavored to draw England also into the revolutionary vortex.<sup>7</sup> With regard to considerations more strictly political, the war with Austria might have been overlooked ; although even that has been clearly proved to have been provoked by the French government, in order to favor the abolition of royalty :<sup>8</sup> but when Savoy was incorporated with France, in contradiction to the formal renunciation of all plans of conquest ; when Belgium was declared independent, under the protection of France ; when the navigation of the Scheldt was opened, in disregard of all existing relations between European states ; and a decree of the sixteenth of November ordered the French troops to pursue the fugitive Austrians into the Dutch territories ;<sup>9</sup>—then it was that the British government thought it expedient to place the country in a state of defence : accordingly the militia were called out, the Tower was strengthened, and parliament summoned to meet on the thirteenth of December. Never did more momentous objects demand its attention, than during the ensuing session : never were interests more complicated and important than those which resulted from two subjects closely interwoven with each other ;—the operation of jacobinical principles, and the advances of French power. In the speech from the throne, the dangerous principle of interference with other states, lately proclaimed and acted on by the rulers of France, was strongly pointed out. ' I have carefully observed,' said his majesty, ' a strict neutrality in the present war on the continent, and have

<sup>6</sup> See State Papers in Annual Register, vol. xxxiv. p. 327.

<sup>7</sup> The designs of the revolutionary party in this country were very powerfully counteracted by an 'association against republicans and levellers,' instituted by Mr. John Reeves in the beginning of November this year, which was very generally joined, and gave an important turn to public opinion. Similar associations for preserving the constitution were multiplied in all parts of the kingdom, which soon put a stop to the boast of the French convention, 'that our respectable islanders, once their masters in the social art, had now become their disciples.' See Annual Register for 1793, p. 137.

<sup>8</sup> See Marsh's Politics, vol. ii. p. 132, &c.

<sup>9</sup> Annual Register for 1793, p. 165.



uniformly abstained from any interference in the internal affairs of France: but it is impossible to see, without serious uneasiness, the strong and increasing indications which have there appeared of an intention to excite disturbances in other countries, to disregard the rights of neutral nations, and to pursue views of conquest and aggrandisement; as well as to adopt towards my allies, the States-General, who have observed the same neutrality as myself, measures which are neither conformable to the law of nations, nor to the stipulations of existing treaties.'

On moving the address, a memorable debate arose, in which Mr. Fox declared it to be his firm conviction, that there was not one fact stated in the king's speech which was not false, or one assertion which was not unfounded: while he acknowledged that the calamities which had befallen a neighboring kingdom ought to deter men from forming experimental governments, he denied that there had been any insurrection in this kingdom to warrant the measure of calling out the national militia. Admitting that there had been riots in some places, he asserted, that those who were concerned in them had no design to subvert the constitution, which they knew to be the source of blessings to all classes of his majesty's subjects. He said, that a miserable pretext had been held out of imaginary dangers, for assembling parliament in an extraordinary way, in order to plunge the country into a foreign war: under the pretence of guarding the constitution against republicans and levellers, there was great risk of running into the opposite evil;—that of increasing the power of the crown, and degrading the house of commons. It was at such a period as the present, that the most dangerous, because the most unexpected attacks, were made on the dearest rights of the people, when the minds of men were agitated by the 'idiotic clamor of republican frenzy, and popular insurrection.' He was aware, he said, that his opinions respecting the situation of the country were unpopular, and that a general alarm did prevail; but this alarm had been created by ministerial arts. He condemned many of the associations; and recommended a repeal of the test and corporation acts, a reform of parliament, and a removal of those disabilities to which the Roman catholics were subject, as the best means of quieting the alarm of the people, and putting an end to all causes of complaint: he considered the associations lately formed in some parishes of Westminster, to obtain registers of strangers resident therein, and preventing seditious newspapers from being read in public



houses, as inconsistent with the law and the constitution, militating against freedom of opinion and the liberty of the press: he asserted, that there was at present more danger from the exploded doctrine of despotism than from the new-fangled theory of republicanism; although some societies had indulged themselves in frantic speculations, and published toasts which he thought objectionable. In speaking of French affairs, he censured the recall of our ambassador from Paris; and confessed that he had rejoiced in the duke of Brunswick's defeat, because his success would have ruined the cause of liberty, not only in France, but in England; would have ruined the liberty of man: he called the action at Jemappe a glorious victory, although it made France mistress of the Netherlands, while it facilitated the invasion of Holland; and he concluded with a motion, to leave out of the address all those expressions which acknowledged the existence at home of seditious practices dangerous to the constitution, and also those which related to the hostile proceedings of the French government: instead of which, he proposed to substitute a few sentences, expressive of anxiety and concern regarding measures which had been adopted by the executive government, and which were authorised by law only in cases of insurrection; assuring his majesty, that his faithful commons would make it their first business to inquire into the facts stated in his majesty's speech, on account of which parliament had been assembled in a manner new and alarming to the country.

Mr. Burke said, that this day was indeed a trial of the constitution: he agreed with an honorable gentleman, in regarding the present as a momentous crisis; but for reasons very different from those which he had assigned: he was sensible how closely liberty and monarchy were connected in this country; that they were never found asunder; that they had flourished together 1000 years; and from this union had sprung the prosperity and glory of the nation: what he dreaded, should French principles extend their influence here, was the destruction of all social order: he would affirm, that there was a faction in this country, who wished to render it subject to France, in order that our government might be reformed on the French system: he would likewise affirm, that the French rulers, cherishing views on this country, encouraged that faction, and were disposed to aid it in overturning our constitution: as a proof of this, he read from their own gazette an account of their proceedings, when a deputation of Englishmen was admitted to the bar of the convention, on the very day in



which there had been a discussion respecting the union of Savoy and France. To their republican address, the president, in his reply, observed, 'that royalty in Europe was in the agonies of death; that the declaration of right, now placed by the side of thrones, was a fire, which in the end would consume them; and he even hoped that the time was not far distant, when France, England, Scotland, Ireland—all Europe!—all mankind! would form but one peaceful family.' If Englishmen had applied to Louis XVI. to reform our government, he asked whether such language would not have been considered as an aggression? What rendered the factions of this country particularly dangerous, was their connexion with the band of French robbers and assassins, who had declared war against all kings, and consequently against this country, if it had a king: the question now was, not whether we should make an address to the throne, but whether we should have a throne at all: he concluded with recommending unanimity, and representing the danger which might arise from the progress of the French arms, if not speedily resisted: their power had already become formidable to the whole of Europe; and if we would not have Europe go from us, we must interpose effectually to stop their career.

Mr. Dundas and others spoke on the same side, referring, in proof of existing danger, to the numerous societies of a mischievous tendency, established in every part of the kingdom; the addresses of these societies to the national convention, and the constant communication kept up between their principal members and French agents; the industrious circulation of seditious pamphlets; actual insurrections in several specified places; and one instance, where the tree of liberty, the emblem of French doctrines, had been planted amid shouts of 'liberty and equality! no excise! no king!' hence arose the general alarm which pervaded all ranks and descriptions of people; visible to every one not determined to shut his eyes against it; and evinced by the loyal associations, and declarations of attachment to the constitution, which had been spontaneously made in almost every part of the kingdom. The only mode of counteracting the joint design of domestic and foreign foes, and of averting from this country the calamities which had desolated France, was for the legislature to second these exertions of the well-disposed part of the community by active and vigorous measures: any endeavor to remove discontents by compliance or concession would be vain, when the constitution itself was held out as a grievance to be removed; and the people were



taught that the present was the time to assert their rights, and with the assistance of France, to follow the example set by that country. Mr. Pitt was not present at this debate, in consequence of having vacated his seat by accepting the office of warden of the cinque ports: when the house divided, there appeared for the amendment fifty votes, and against it two hundred and ninety. In the lords the address was carried without a division, though not without opposition from the duke of Norfolk, and the lords Lansdowne, Rawdon, and Stanhope. A great defection from the whig party had taken place in the upper house: at the head of the seceders were the prince of Wales, the duke of Portland, lords Fitzwilliam, Spencer, Mansfield, and Loughborough; the last of whom had lately been made chancellor in the room of lord Thurlow.

The decisive majority against Mr. Fox's amendment did not deter that gentleman from renewing his opposition to the address, when reported on the following day; and from offering another amendment, the object of which was, to induce his majesty to open a negociation with France, for the purpose of preventing war. The motion was opposed by Mr. Burke in a vehement speech, affirming 'that to send an ambassador to France would be a prelude to the murder of our own sovereign.' In the absence of the minister, Mr. secretary Dundas entered into a long and elaborate vindication of the measures of administration; concluding with a confident prediction, 'that if we were forced into a war, it would prove successful and glorious.' The amendment was negatived without a division.

Not discouraged by the ill success of these attempts, Mr. Fox, on the fifteenth of December, made a very forcible speech; and concluded with moving, 'that a minister be sent to Paris to treat with those persons who exercise provisionally the executive government of France.' This, he said, would imply neither approbation nor disapprobation of that government; and he enforced his motion by many instances of ministers sent to various courts, at a time when they were concerned in the most nefarious transactions; but in none of those instances was any sanction given directly or indirectly to their proceedings. Mr. Windham having laid it down as an axiom of policy, 'that to be justified in negociating with France, it should be a matter of necessity, not of choice;'—Mr. Sheridan exclaimed,—'Happy, dignified opportunity to treat! when necessity—a necessity arising from defeat and discomfiture, from shame and disgrace—shall compel us to



negociate on terms which would leave us completely at the mercy of our enemies ! How consolatory, to be able to boast that we were at the same time justified and undone ! But we are told,' he continued, 'that to treat with France would give offence to the allied powers, with whom we are eventually to co-operate. Are we then prepared to make a common cause, on the principles, and for the purposes, which have led those despots into an association ? Are the freemen of England ready to subscribe to the manifesto of the duke of Brunswick ?—that detestable outrage on the rights and feelings of humanity ;—that impotent and wretched tissue of pride, folly, and cruelty, which had steeled the heart and maddened the brain of France ! On what principle shall we go to war ? To restore ancient despotism ? Impossible. Disputes and causes of complaint existing, how were they to be terminated but by some sort of negociation ? But, it is said, the dignity of the nation forbids a public and avowed communication with the ruling powers of that country. Was the dignity of the nation then better consulted by the mean subterfuge of an indirect and underhand intercourse ? Was it sacrificed by a magnanimous frankness, and sustained only by a dark and insidious disguise ? Instead of recalling our ambassador from his post in the late perilous crisis, a wise and politic administration would have regarded it as a situation which demanded the ablest talents in the country ; as affording scope and interest for the noblest mind that ever warmed a human breast. The French had been uniformly partial, and even prejudiced, in favor of the English. What manly sense and generous feeling, above all, what fair truth and plain dealing might have effected, it was difficult to calculate : but the policy, which discarded them, and substituted in their stead a hollow neutrality, was an error fatal in its consequences, and for ever to be lamented.' The motion was in the end rejected without a division.

Mr. Pitt, having been re-elected for the university of Cambridge, resumed his seat on the eighteenth ; and taking the first opportunity of reference to the foregoing debates, declared his conviction of the truth of the facts stated, and his intire approbation of the arguments urged in support of the address. He knew, from unquestionable authority, the situation of the country to be still such, that the smallest spark might produce a dreadful explosion ; and he added, 'that to send an ambassador to France, under present circumstances, would be incompatible with the dignity of the crown, and contrary to



the interests of the public; counteracting and disclaiming those very principles, on which the whole of our conduct was founded.' He heard with pleasure of the decided opinion expressed by all parties, that if war should appear to be necessary, it ought to be carried on with vigor: but at the same time he assured the house, that nothing, consistent with the dignity of the crown, the internal safety of the country, and the general security of Europe, should be omitted by government to avert the calamities of war.

Hitherto all the aggression had been on the part of France, for which satisfaction was due; and the French professed to wish for a pacific adjustment: conformably to these professions, M. Maret, who succeeded Le Brun as foreign minister of France, had come over himself to England, to confer with Mr. Pitt. His Britannic majesty had avoided all discussion respecting the diplomatic capacity of ministers sent by the executive council of France, because an admission of their official character would have been to admit the executorial competency of their employers: Mr. Pitt therefore and M. Maret did not meet as official ministers of England and France; though they did meet; and their conversation, as detailed from M. Maret's communication,<sup>10</sup> showed that the British minister earnestly desired to preserve peace; while the other endeavored to explain the obnoxious decree of the nineteenth of November, as not intended to apply to England. On the subject of the Scheldt, he stated that the order of the council, and the decree of the convention, respecting that navigation, founded as they were on the most sacred principles of Gallic liberty, were irrevocable; by which he admitted that the internal change in France was considered by its votaries as authorising them to violate the rights of foreign and independent nations. The same questions were agitated, with much greater detail, in the latter part of this year, between M. Chauvelin and lord Grenville; though the former was not acknowledged in his official capacity. Chauvelin, after expressing a strong desire to know whether France was to consider England as a neutral or a hostile power, still maintained the right of opening the Scheldt; though he declared, by order of the executive council, that if, at the end of the war, the Belgians, free and unfettered, should relinquish that navigation, the French would offer no opposition: he wholly

<sup>10</sup> By Mr. Miles, a confidential friend of M. Maret, in a work styled 'Authentic Correspondence.'



rejected any hostile interpretation of the decree of fraternisation; and declared that France would not attack Holland, while the latter power adhered to the principles of neutrality. These professions were not satisfactory to the British minister, being contradicted by facts. The application of the principles of the decree to Great Britain, appeared plain from the public reception given, and the speeches made to deputies from seditious associations, on various occasions. With regard to Holland, the very act of opening the Scheldt was an attack on that country; and England could never consent that France should arrogate to herself the power of annulling at her pleasure, and under pretence of a natural right, the political system of Europe, established by treaties, and guarantied by all its powers. If France was really anxious to maintain peace and friendship with Great Britain, her course was to renounce every view of aggression and aggrandisement, and to confine herself within her own territory, without insulting other nations, disturbing their tranquillity, and violating their rights. In the January following, new credential letters were sent to M. Chauvelin, with a memorial from the executive council, repeating its desire to maintain harmony between the two kingdoms; and explaining the decree, as not intended to favor sedition, but as merely applicable to a case, where the general will of a nation, clearly and unequivocally expressed, should call for the fraternity and assistance of the French nation. Sedition, it was said, can never exist in the expression of a general will: the Dutch were not seditious when they formed the generous resolution of throwing off the Spanish yoke; nor was it accounted a crime in Henry IV. and queen Elizabeth to afford them assistance: as to the right of navigation on the Scheldt, it was a question of absolute indifference to England, of little consequence to Holland, but of immense importance to the Belgians, who were not parties to the treaty of Westphalia, when they were deprived of that right. If, when in full possession of liberty, they should decline that right, it was repeated, that France would not oppose it. With respect to the charge of aggrandisement, it was declared, that France had renounced, and still renounces, all ideas of conquest: her occupation of the Netherlands would only continue till peace should be made. If these explanations appeared insufficient, France, having done every thing in her power to preserve harmony, would prepare for war: she would combat the English, whom she esteemed, with regret, but without fear. Lord Grenville's reply to this memorial declared, that instead



of reparation and retraction, nothing was offered but an illusory negociation; consequently, that all the motives for preparation on the side of Great Britain still continued: if, however, he observed, the French council had any farther explanations to offer under this extra-official form, he would willingly attend to them. In a separate note, his lordship informed M. Chauvelin, that his majesty was not disposed to receive his new letters of credence from the French republic. The envoy then requested a personal interview; but this was also refused.

As the revolution caused a great influx of Frenchmen into this country, of whom some came for the sole purpose of exciting discontent and sedition among his majesty's subjects; ministers had in December last introduced into the house of lords an alien bill; by which it was enacted, that any foreigner, who should refuse to depart from the kingdom when ordered by his majesty, should be liable to be committed to jail, brought to trial, and sentenced to suffer imprisonment for a month, and afterwards to leave the kingdom within a limited time, under pain of transportation for life: also that every alien, who had arrived in England since January 1, 1792, should give a full account of himself to a magistrate of the district in which he resided; that every one, who might hereafter arrive, should give to the officer of the port where he landed a similar account, telling also his place of destination, and waiting for a passport; that his majesty might appoint places for the residence of aliens; and that copies of the accounts given by them should be transmitted to the secretary of state. This bill met with considerable opposition, as appearing to be without precedent, and uncalled for; but it seemed to the majority a proper measure of precaution and self-defence; merely rejecting the emissaries of republicanism, regicide, and atheism, while it left the road open to innocent or meritorious sufferers. Mr. Burke, speaking in its favor, introduced a very novel species of oratory, in which he hazarded the ridiculous by attempting the sublime. Having for some time commented on a decree of the convention, indirectly recommending the sword as an instrument in the system of fraternisation, he mentioned the circumstance of 3000 daggers having been ordered at Birmingham; and as a tangible illustration of his statement and argument, he drew forth one which he had concealed under his coat; and, flinging it with violence on the floor of the house;—‘that,’ he exclaimed, pointing to the weapon, ‘is what you are to gain by an alliance with France:



wherever their principles are introduced, their practice will follow ; you must equally proscribe their persons and their tenets from your shores.' His political opponents termed this unusual peroration a vile pantomimical trick, unworthy of a great orator, who could command the attention and sympathy of the house by other and more legitimate means. The bill, however, which was not intended to continue in force beyond the end of next session, passed the commons, as it had passed the lords, without a division ; and received the royal assent on the eighth of January this year. Mr. Pitt, not considering any other measure to be at present necessary for the preservation of public tranquillity, proposed an adjournment to the twenty-third, which was unanimously accorded.

To the proofs already adduced of the warlike intentions of the French government against this country, may be added the circular letter sent by Monge, minister of marine, to the sea-ports of France ; in which, speaking of the English republicans, he said ;—' We will fly to their assistance ; we will make a descent on that island ; we will hurl thither 50,000 caps of liberty ; we will plant there the sacred tree, and stretch out our arms to our brother republicans : the tyranny of their government shall soon be destroyed.' This letter, and a resolution of the executive council accompanying it on the seventh of January, the very day before Le Brun signed his pacific note to lord Grenville, caused great activity in the French ports, where it was considered as the signal for an immediate attack on England : besides, on the thirteenth, three days after the order had been given for the invasion of Holland, an addition of thirty line of battle ships was made to the French navy, for the avowed purpose of acting against England, though the French had then in commission more ships than were preparing in the British ports. It seems clear therefore that the Gallic rulers expected hostilities to follow the invasion of Holland ; and with regard to that invasion, Dumouriez confessed, that Le Brun, early in January, desired him to pay no attention to the negociations then depending with England and Holland ; meaning, of course, that these negociations were not intended to produce any effect. Dumouriez communicated this information on the tenth of January to Miranda, who commanded the army in his absence ; and directed him to make arrangements with all possible secrecy for invading the territory of Holland within twelve days, according to a plan laid down by the French minister : yet only two days after these secret orders had been



given, the convention passed a decree, directing the council to inform the British government that it was the intention of the republic to maintain peace and fraternity with England, and to respect her independence, as well as that of her allies, so long as they should not attack France.<sup>11</sup>

Matters, however, were soon brought to a crisis. The French revolutionists did not think their triumph complete, or their position secure, until they had displayed the scene of a royal execution: the king, therefore, was brought to the bar of the convention: the Girondists wished his condemnation, not his death; but they feared to risk their popularity by endeavoring to save him, although a few of the most distinguished of the party eloquently predicted the future miseries of France, and the consequent elevation of a revolutionary chief, in their anxiety to avert the fatal sentence: but the terrorists of the Mountain prevailed, and the unfortunate Louis was doomed to the scaffold. After his execution, there being no longer even the shadow of a government in France, all diplomatic intercourse necessarily ceased; M. Chauvelin received notice to quit the British dominions within eight days; and a war with the republic became no longer a matter of choice. The determination of its government plainly appeared on the twenty-fifth, when a report was made relative to an organisation of the land forces; and it was proposed that England should be invaded by an army of 40,000 men: an expedition was also contemplated against the Cape of Good Hope, under the command of La Clos, who was afterwards to proceed to the East Indies, join Tippoo Saib, and attack Bengal.

On Monday, the twenty-eighth of January, four days after M. Chauvelin had been ordered to leave the kingdom, his Britannic majesty sent a message to the house of commons, importing, that he had given directions for copies of a correspondence, &c. between the late minister of his most christian majesty and our foreign secretary to be laid before them; also stating the necessity of making a farther augmentation of forces by sea and land; and his reliance on the known affection and zeal of the house of commons, to enable him effectually to maintain the rights and security of his own dominions, support his allies, and oppose those ambitious views of aggrandisement in France, which would be at all

<sup>11</sup> See Tomline's Life of Pitt, vol. iii. p. 512, &c.



times dangerous to the interests of Europe, but were particularly so when connected with principles subversive of social order.

On the first of February this message was taken into consideration, when an animated and interesting debate arose, the result of which proved that all hopes of amicable accommodation between England and France were at an end. It was opened by Mr. Pitt, who first adverted to that atrocious event in France, which he described as outraging every sentiment of religion, justice, and humanity; a transaction, exhibiting the effect of principles pushed to their utmost extent; principles which set out with dissolving all the bonds of society; and which, presumptuously relying on fanciful theories, rejected, not only the wisdom and experience of former ages, but the sacred instructions of revelation itself. Hence was suggested a useful subject for reflection, to preserve this country from a similar scene of calamity and guilt. He contrasted the happy condition of England, where equal protection was afforded to every individual, with the present insecure and licentious state of France, where jacobinism had given a more fatal blow to liberty than the boldest attempts of the most aspiring monarch: he then pointed out the strict neutrality observed by his Britannic majesty in the domestic affairs of France, and the manner in which the national assembly had received addresses from seditious clubs in England: adverting also to the professions made by the French government to renounce all interference with the government of other states, to lay aside views of conquest, and to respect the rights of his majesty and his allies; he entered at large into the offensive line of conduct which they had pursued, and showed how by anticipation they had passed sentence on themselves. Under these circumstances, Mr. Pitt, conceiving it scarcely possible that a war could be avoided, thought it his duty to propose an address to the king, which, after thanking him for his communication of correspondence, and offering the heart-felt condolence of the house on the atrocious deed lately perpetrated at Paris, should express their sense of the ambitious and aggressive system of French policy; declare their vigorous opposition to such conduct, as well as the principles from which it originated; and promise to make a suitable provision for a farther augmentation of the national forces by sea and land.

Mr. Fox, after acknowledging that Mr. Pitt had stated the grounds of complaint against France ably and accurately, still



deprecatèd war, as an evil, which, under present circumstances, would be peculiarly injurious to the country; but admitted that we were bound to supply the Dutch with the contingent of troops stipulated for by treaty, as the preservation of national faith was paramount to every other consideration. Although he reprobated in the strongest terms the execution of Louis XVI., as violating all the principles of justice, and totally at variance with that republican magnanimity which his enemies had professed; yet he saw neither propriety nor wisdom in our passing judgment on an act committed in another kingdom, which had no distinct relation to this: if the French chose to annihilate their own institutions, they were not invading the rights of England: such a cause for going to war was totally unjust: our efforts would spill the blood of our own countrymen, and overwhelm us with an additional debt: we might wage war year after year with France, as with America; but we should make no progress; and should be obliged in the end to conclude a peace, recognising whatever form of government was found established. He objected to the address, as condemning principles, the abuse of which only ought to be blamed: the principles themselves were those, on which all just and equitable government was founded; though he acknowledged that they had been carried too far by the French: but he contended, that external force would only increase the rage of that enthusiasm, which might subside, if left to its own operation. 'If,' he concluded, 'the right honorable gentleman would but save the country from a war of opinion; however inconsistent with his former declarations his measures might be, he would gladly consent to give him a general indemnity for the whole, and even a vote of thanks. Let not the fatal notion go abroad, that kings have an interest different from that of their subjects; that between those who had property and those who had none, there was not a common cause, and common feeling.' Similar sentiments were eloquently displayed on the same side of the house by earl Wycomb, and Mr. Whitbread, jun. The former asked what dangers were to be averted from this country, secured, as it was, by its insular situation, its internal resources, and the attachment of its people to their constitution? As to the security of our allies, we could not be told that Prussia had been attacked by France; of course, therefore, this part of the message must relate to Holland. It would be idle and impolitic, he said, in the Dutch to meditate war; and they did not seem disposed to do so: shall we then urge them



to it? If the navigation of the Scheldt was the subject of dispute, it appeared a matter of indifference to this country, except that in one point of view it would be of great advantage to our commerce and manufactures, by opening for them a new channel into the continent. He thought it by no means safe to go to war against principles: if those alluded to were levelling principles, they should be met with contempt; but he by no means reprobated all the French principles. Great stress had been laid on French cruelties, but they were no proper cause of war: besides, in his opinion, these had arisen from the famous expedition of the duke of Brunswick; which might be styled a fraternity of kings, for the purpose of imposing despotism on Europe. Another ground taken by ministers was the preservation of the balance of power, or the European system; but he could see no reason why this country should be so ready on all occasions to go to war for the benefit of other nations: this system he looked on as nothing but a political fiction, a cover for any interference which caprice might dictate. He next adverted to the means of carrying on a war; pointing out the certain exhaustion of our resources, and the consequent necessity of augmenting the burdens of the people. The death of the French king, he said, had been most pathetically lamented by ministers, but they never interfered to prevent it; and while they professed peace, they had made use of the most haughty and irritating provocations to war.

Mr. Whitbread enlarged on some of the preceding arguments, and placed others in new points of view. With regard to Holland, he observed, 'that he should conceive it a hard necessity for Great Britain to go to war, for the purpose of maintaining to the Dutch the exclusive navigation of the Scheldt; though he had never said that he was against supporting the faith of treaties, when the *casus fœderis* was clearly defined: but could it be said, that in this instance, a new and unexercised right of nature was contended for? certainly not. Antwerp, indeed, was a monument of the exercise of such a right by her inhabitants; and he was free to say, that it would give him joy to see the commerce of that once flourishing city restored; for the exclusive navigation of the Scheldt had been established by force, and consented to by weakness: but a necessary preliminary to these investigations, would have been some precise requisition by the Dutch for the stipulated assistance of their ally. The chancellor of the exchequer had avowed that no such demand had been made; and if the house were to judge of the disposition of the States-General by their



own declarations, it would be found that they did not think it worth their while to go to war for the maintenance of this right. He alluded to their proclamation on the tenth of January, in which they declared that they were then at peace, and that the strict neutrality which they had observed protected them from aggression; a manifest token that they did not consider the free navigation of the Scheldt a reason for going to war.' The question being put on the motion, the address was carried without a division: indeed, the propriety and necessity of war, on our part, were already acknowledged by the old whigs, who thus became separated by a broad line of policy from Mr. Fox's party, from which they abstracted much both of moral and numerical strength.

It has been matter of surprise to many, how this eminent statesman could so perseveringly resist and condemn a measure which was unavoidable; for the war was in spirit and character only a development of the democratic principle which had been generated in France; nor had the French government the power, even if it had possessed the inclination, to control its subjects, or prevent that communication with the discontented in other states, which was the object of so much alarm to their governments. Mr. Pitt had no more desire than Mr. Fox for war; which might destroy, but was not likely to increase, the honor he had acquired during a state of tranquillity; and how his antagonist could have avoided the storm, if he had been placed in the same situation, it is difficult to conceive. He might, perhaps, have parleyed a little longer with the republic; he might have withheld some of our reasonable demands, overlooked slighter affronts, tolerated corresponding societies, and submitted longer to the arts of French emissaries; but as the demands on his patience rose, so his concessions must have had an end. He could not have blinded the quick discernment of George III.; he could not have resisted the deliberate conviction of his whig coadjutors; he could not, as minister, have withstood the clear views and reasonings of Mr. Burke; though, as leader of opposition, his pride forbade him to acquiesce in measures which might imply deference to the talents of Mr. Pitt: he must therefore have entered into the contest, though he would have entered it later; when the enemy had acquired more territory and more proselytes; when the situation of the allied powers had become more precarious, and our means of defence had been proportionally weakened.

The proceedings of the British government relative to the



augmentation of the army and navy were fully justified by the event; for on the first of February, the national convention, finding their plans ripe for execution, unanimously declared war against the king of Great Britain, and the stadtholder of Holland.

Many as were those averse to war, on the totally untenable grounds of democracy and jacobinism, or on the more constitutional principles of Mr. Fox, public opinion, that great engine of politics among a free people, was on the whole in favor of hostilities; and in accepting the challenge thus thrown out by the French republicans, his majesty may be said to have spoken the voice of the British nation: nor is there any example of a country better prepared for a struggle with its bitter foe. During the course of the last century, while the government of France was gradually sinking into a dissolution of its principles, and the federal combinations of the continent became relaxed, Great Britain had constantly advanced in a system of improvement: she had indeed suffered a temporary depression while throwing off dependencies, which, having arrived at maturity, would thenceforward have occasioned only embarrassment and confusion; but under the healing hand of her great finance minister, she recovered rapidly from her distress; and she attained to a degree of prosperity unexampled in modern annals, just when the existence of such a state and such a government was necessary to stem the progress of ruin. The war, therefore, which now commenced, was the struggle of all the political and moral machinery of improved society against the brute force of a nation, which, after casting off its own government, armed itself to attack the repose and happiness of surrounding states.

The declaration of war was announced by the king to the two houses in terms of great indignation; and the French were accused by Mr. Pitt and other speakers of gross injustice and iniquity, though the charges were retorted by opposition members against our ministers and their abettors. Addresses, breathing a warlike spirit, were now presented to his majesty; and motions by Mr. Fox, Mr. Grey, and others, for the purpose of ascertaining the precise ground of war, for requesting his majesty to seize the first opportunity of adjusting differences, for taking into consideration the seditious practices alluded to in the king's speech, and against the erection of barracks or inland fortresses in our free country, were all successively rejected or negatived; so decided a preponderance had the advocates for warlike measures now acquired. On the



sixth of March, a royal message was presented to parliament, stating that his majesty had engaged a body of his electoral troops in the service of Great Britain to assist his allies, the States-General; and that he had directed an estimate of the charge to be laid before the house of commons.

On the eleventh, Mr. Pitt brought forward his budget for the current year, estimating the total of expenses at £11,182,213, and that of the ways and means at £8,299,696. He proposed to raise the deficiency, by rendering permanent the temporary taxes imposed on account of the Spanish armament. Some remarks which he made on this occasion show how little he then contemplated the excessive increase of debt and taxation which has since occurred. 'I do not think it useless,' said he, 'to suggest some observations on the contest in which we are engaged. The excess of the permanent revenue is now £900,000 above the peace establishment; and if this should even be destroyed by war, the country would then be left in possession of all its ordinary revenue: but this £900,000 I am desirous to leave as a security against those contingences to which war is liable.' The sum borrowed was £4,500,000: the terms were, that for every £72 advanced, the lender should be entitled to £100 stock, bearing interest at three per cent: he expected to have made better terms, but had not received two offers for this loan. Among other resources, the sum of £675,000 was to be raised by lottery; but several regulations were laid down to diminish the practice of insurance, a species of gambling on chances which had been found very injurious to the lower classes.

As it was obviously expedient, after a declaration of war, to prevent correspondence between British subjects and the hostile party, the attorney-general<sup>12</sup> brought in a bill called the 'traitorous correspondence bill,' which declared it treasonable to supply the existing government of France with military stores, to purchase lands of inheritance in France, to invest money in its public funds, or to underwrite insurances on French ships and goods: it also prohibited, under the penalty of a misdemeanor, any person going from this country to France without a license under the privy seal; and also the return of British subjects now resident there, unless they gave security to the government. This bill was opposed, as inconsistent with the treason laws of Edward III., the principles of the British constitution, and commercial policy.

<sup>12</sup> Sir John Scott.



After many debates, the two clauses which were considered most objectionable, respecting the purchase of property in France and the return of British subjects, were abandoned: some less important modifications were made, and the bill passed into a law. Seamen were this year voted to the amount of 45,000; and the military force was augmented to 27,000 men, beside the colonial troops.

Early in April, Le Brun, minister of foreign affairs in France, addressed a letter to lord Grenville, stating that the republic was anxious to terminate all differences with Great Britain, and requesting a passport for a person vested with full powers for that purpose: he named Maret as the proposed plenipotentiary; but the British government took no notice of the application; and about this time a treaty was concluded with Sardinia, by which England bound herself to furnish his Sardinian majesty with a subsidy of £200,000 annually, to be paid three months in advance; and to conclude no peace without comprehending in it the restitution of all territories belonging to that monarch at the time he engaged in the war. The unusual number and extent of bankruptcies which at this time occurred, through the spirit of commercial speculation, occasioned the appointment of a select committee to investigate the subject; and it was discovered that the large issues of paper money, and scarcity of coin, had induced bankers to suspend the usual discounts; in expectation of which, merchants had formed engagements that were far from exceeding their property, though, in the present pecuniary state of the country, they surpassed their convertible effects: as a remedy for this evil, an issue of exchequer bills was recommended to the amount of £5,000,000, under commissioners, to be nominated for the purpose of lending the same, in portions bearing legal interest, to such mercantile persons as were in temporary distress, but could give proper security. This bill was objected to, not only as ineffectual against failures, which were ascribed to the present ruinous war; but as opening a path to the exercise of improper patronage by government, which could either grant or refuse accommodation according to the political conduct of the applicant: it was, however, carried; and its operation soon restored commercial credit. Another subject of great commercial importance at this time engaged the attention of the legislature: the charter of the East India company being on the eve of expiration, it was very generally supposed that the monopoly would be abolished, and the Indian trade



thrown open to the whole energy of British enterprise: on the twenty-third of April Mr. Dundas brought the question fully before the house, in consequence of a petition from the company, and presented a masterly view of the prosperous state of India under the present system; laying it down as a sound proposition, that legislators ought not rashly to relinquish a positive good in possession for a probable good in anticipation: he brought in a bill to renew the charter for twenty years; at the same time he proposed certain regulations tending to promote a free trade, but not interfering with the company's charter. This bill, together with one to relieve the Roman catholics of Scotland from certain penalties and disabilities imposed on them by acts disabling them from holding or transmitting landed property, were passed without a division on either: also a board of agriculture was established, at the suggestion of Sir John Sinclair; and £3000 per annum were voted for the encouragement of a science, which had never occupied a share of legislative attention proportional to its vast importance, since Great Britain became so eminent for manufactures and commerce. During this session, the counsel for Warren Hastings completed his defence on the last three articles, viz. the begums, presents, and contracts; after which, he addressed the court, praying that their lordships would order the trial to continue to its final conclusion during the present session; but farther proceedings were adjourned till that which followed.

The ministerial members and their new associates were so apprehensive of the influence of French principles at this crisis, that they opposed with strenuous zeal the adoption of a scheme of reform in the parliamentary representation. Mr. Grey, who brought it forward, contended that the present time was as favorable as any other to the success of such a plan, as it would tend to conciliate the people and repress disaffection. 'Whatever evils,' said he, 'did or might threaten the nation, there was no preventive so certain, no safeguard so powerful, as an uncorrupted house of commons, emanating fairly and freely from the people: to the want of this we owed the American war, and the vast accumulation of national debt: if this had been accomplished last year, it probably would have saved us from our present distresses. No set of Britons, unless bereft of their senses, could, after recent events, propose the French revolution as a model for our imitation: but were such principles even likely to threaten danger,



the surest way of preventing it was, to promote the comfort and happiness of the people, to gratify their reasonable wishes, and to grant a parliamentary reform which was so earnestly desired.' These arguments were enforced in a very able speech by Mr. Whitbread, who enlarged eloquently on the causes of revolution, which he mainly attributed to the feelings of the governed being outraged by the grinding oppression of their governors. Mr. Jenkinson, however, thought that the proposed alterations would occasion a preponderance of democracy in the legislature; and Mr. Powys, referring to the convulsed state of France, remonstrated against any attempt of supposed improvement. The premier argued against the proposal, and was severely attacked on the score of his inconsistency by Mr. Fox; but the scheme was discountenanced by a majority of almost seven to one. On the twenty-first of June parliament was prorogued by his majesty.

An important concession made to the Roman catholics of Ireland this session naturally turns our attention to the affairs of that country. The failure of Mr. Pitt's attempt in 1785 to reconcile the commercial interests of the two countries, was followed by resolutions among the Irish to abstain from the importation of English manufactures; and attempts made by the populace to enforce them occasioned frequent tumults and alarms: these formed a pretext, in the session of 1786, for an act establishing a police in the city of Dublin; and as a heavy tax was laid on the inhabitants for the maintenance of public officers appointed by the crown, they took great offence at the measure.

Disturbances of a more serious nature arose this year in the south of Ireland: the persons engaged in them called themselves right-boys, resembling their predecessors the white-boys in almost every thing but the name: their principal object was to defraud the protestant clergy of their incomes; for which purpose the farmers entered into a combination, under the sanction of an oath, neither to compound for tithes, nor to assist any clergyman in drawing them. This insurrection began in Kerry, where the people, assembling in catholic chapels, swore to obey the orders of captain Right, and to fleece the clergy; engaging that a large number should summon different clergymen to draw their tithes on the same day, and to suffer no proctors: they published indeed a tithing-table at a very low rate, according to which they promised to pay; but even to this they did not adhere. The combination soon extended to Cork and other neighboring counties, where the insurgents marched in large bodies, but without arms, administering their oath in



the name of captain Right, giving out their laws, and punishing recusants according to the practice of the white-boys: in these proceedings, they were secretly encouraged, and their cruelties connived at, by many gentlemen of landed property, who hoped by such means to exonerate their estates from tithes; but when the insurgents proceeded to limit the rents of land, to increase the price of labor, and oppose the collection of hearth-money, an outcry was raised against their designs; and in the beginning of the following year, an act passed for preventing tumultuous and illegal assemblies. On this occasion, the attorney-general, Fitzgibbon, after the most accurate inquiries, exculpated the clergy from all charges of extortion; declaring, that, instead of a tenth, their legal demand, few of them received a twentieth of the produce; that the insurrection was not owing to them, but to the landlords; who ground the miserable peasants by enormous rents, charging them six pounds an acre for their land, and obliging them to work at fivepence a day; so that they were unable, not only to pay the clergy their due, but to obtain food and raiment for themselves and families: some landlords had gone so far as to excite their tenants to rob the clergy, not for the purpose of alleviating their own distress, but of adding the value of the tithes to the merciless rack-rent which was already imposed on them: it also appeared that the magistrates had in general been shamefully neglectful of their duty. In October this year, died, as already has been related, the amiable duke of Rutland; and his successor, the marquis of Buckingham,<sup>13</sup> who met the Irish parliament in January, 1788, immediately proceeded to investigate abuses in the various offices of the castle. The system of peculation was here found to be enormous: military stores were openly embezzled; arms, condemned as useless, were carried away through one gate of the castle and brought back through another, as if newly purchased; and similar frauds were practised in all other departments: hence clerks in subordinate offices, with small nominal salaries, were accustomed to keep up the most splendid establishments: but their accounts having been severely scrutinised by the lord-lieutenant, their frauds detected, and restitution demanded, the defaulters were thrown into such a panic, that some fled the kingdom; others by entreaties and promises eluded the blow; and a few had recourse to the dreadful expedient of suicide.

<sup>13</sup> Late earl Temple.



At this point the marquis was obliged to stop in his plan of economical reform, having no authority to extend it to useless places and pensions, which were thought necessary to secure a majority in parliament for the court: such indeed was the corruption of the Irish legislature, that scarcely any object, even in matters of undoubted utility, could be obtained without profuse largesses of the public money. This mercenary character was eminently displayed in the case of the regency question, when the minister fully expected that the Irish would follow the example of the British parliament in imposing restrictions on the regent; and this the viceroy used all his efforts to accomplish: but there were too many placemen and pensioners, whose ambitious views led them to support the party which they now expected would rise into power: these joined the patriotic band under Grattan; and when the lord-lieutenant refused to forward the address which they had carried through both houses, they deputed commissioners to present it, as already has been described.

In the mean time, Mr. Grattan took advantage of this majority in parliament, to propose bills of a popular description; and several such were introduced with success, especially one to prevent revenue-officers from voting at elections: but this patriotic fever was of short duration: with the change in his majesty's health, their sentiments also changed; and most of the seceders, repenting of their rash conduct, returned to their former connexion with the government: the family of Ponsonby, however, with characteristic spirit, refused to support a lord-lieutenant on whom they had voted a censure,<sup>14</sup> and remained in opposition. Under these altered circumstances, it will hardly appear strange, that, on the twentieth of April, the committal of the bills above mentioned was rejected by that house, of which a large majority had voted for their introduction. The placemen and pensioners, who thus displayed the sincerity of their repentance, were permitted to retain their situations; a few of the more obstinate were dismissed; and some were promoted, who had been found faithful in the day of temptation: among these, was the attorney-general, Fitzgibbon, who was ennobled, and appointed lord chancellor; being the first Irishman entrusted with that high office by the British cabinet: his subsequent conduct fully justified their choice; for he was

<sup>14</sup> For declining to transmit the address on the regency question.



indefatigable in his court, expediting the decision of causes which had long remained undetermined, and making it a rule never afterwards to suffer any to continue so for a longer time than the forms of law absolutely required.

Government, when this struggle terminated, was not inattentive to the means of resisting the opposition to which it had given being: though the professed principle of the marquis of Buckingham had been strict economy, every source of influence was now thrown open: places of all kinds were multiplied, salaries augmented, and the register of venality lengthened by additional pensions to the amount of £13,000 per annum.

‘The arrangement of parties,’ says Dr. Miller,<sup>15</sup> ‘which was at this time formed, seems to have been the completion of the operation, which had been begun twenty years before by lord Townshend. The great interest of the Ponsonbies, which he had labored to subdue, renewed, after no long interval, its connexion with the government; and it was only in the agitation of the regency question, that this interest was finally transferred to the opposition, of which it constituted the principal strength, and furnished one of the most distinguished leaders.’ The other champions in this cause were the acute, sententious Grattan, and the eloquent Curran, the representative of a lower order of the people; who, though possessed of less political knowledge, was endowed with all the stores of a rich and cultivated imagination.

This party, in order to render their opposition more systematic and strong, formed themselves into a whig club, similar to that in London; and at their meetings arranged plans of parliamentary tactics, assigning to each member his particular post. The declared objects for which this association was specifically pledged, were bills for the limitation of places and pensions; for excluding from parliament persons holding pensions not granted for life, as well as certain descriptions of placemen, and obliging the rest to vacate their seats by the acceptance of office; also to disqualify revenue-officers from voting, to repeal the Dublin police bill, and to secure the responsibility of public officers in regard to payments from the treasury; which might, according to the existing law, be issued solely on the king’s authority.

Disgusted by the strenuous opposition made to his measures, and by the loss of his popularity, the marquis of Buckingham

<sup>15</sup> History philosophically illustrated, vol. iv. p. 494.



retired from the country in June, 1789, leaving his office in commission. The earl of Westmorland, his successor, did not arrive till the beginning of the next year; when the same system of corrupt influence was continued by government, and the same strenuous opposition by the patriotic party in parliament: in particular, Grattan charged the administration with the sale of peerages, and applying the money to the purchase of seats in the commons for their adherents; nor could they venture to disavow so unconstitutional an act, though the necessity of procuring a majority to carry on the business of the country might possibly reconcile it to their consciences. In April parliament was dissolved; the new one met in July; and Foster, the late speaker, having been re-elected, it was prorogued to January, 1791. During this session, its proceedings differed but little from those previous to the dissolution; but the patriotic party rather lost strength by the new elections.

The affairs of this country, however, assumed a new complexion from the French revolution, which took place next year, and which was viewed with strong sensations of joy by the general mass of Irishmen: meetings to celebrate its anniversary were held in different places, particularly in Belfast; where, after a magnificent commemoration in 1792, the volunteers and many of the principal inhabitants assembled in the Linen-hall for the discussion of politics: the chief topics were parliamentary reform and catholic emancipation, two subjects now solemnly connected together, in favor of which they entered into very strong resolutions; voting also an address to the French assembly, and another to the Irish people.

A plan of an association, under the title of 'United Irishmen,' for the attainment of these ends, had been printed at Belfast in June, 1791; and in the ensuing November, this new society was established at Dublin, declaring itself 'a union of Irishmen of every religious persuasion, in order to obtain a complete reform of the legislature, founded on the principles of civil, political, and religious liberty.' Whatever may have been the sentiments of the associators generally, some of them appear to have entertained the most democratic notions, and to have conceived the project of overturning the government by force of arms. With similar views, an institution rose up, in Dublin and Cork, of national guards, who adopted a green uniform, the buttons of which were engraved with a harp, surmounted by a cap of liberty: the twenty-ninth



of December, 1792, was appointed for a general muster of this corps in Dublin; all the volunteer companies of the city being invited to attend, and celebrate the triumph of French liberty.

Government, however, whose attention had been early drawn to the inflammatory state of the Irish population; and who, even in 1789, had exercised some severities beyond the due limits of the law;<sup>16</sup> determined to suppress, not only this, but all other armed associations, which were unsanctioned by its authority. Accordingly, on the day preceding the muster, a proclamation was issued, interdicting all seditious assemblies, and commanding the magistrates, if necessary, to disperse them by military force: this effectually prevented the meeting.

The society of United Irishmen, however, though now foiled, determined to persevere; and on the fourteenth of next month issued a counter-proclamation, exhorting the volunteers to resume their arms, as before, for the maintenance of public tranquillity against foreign and domestic foes; recommending also the protestants to unite cordially with the papists, in order to obtain 'universal emancipation and a representative legislature.' In this document the ministry were denominated 'a faction, or gang, which misrepresented the king to his people:' and of the army it was said, 'that they once were citizens; that seduction made them soldiers, but nature made them men.' For this libel, Archibald Hamilton Rowan, secretary of the association, a gentleman of respectable family and fortune, was afterwards prosecuted and convicted.

A secret committee for managing the political concerns of the Irish catholics, elected from the various dioceses, had subsisted in Dublin since 1757. In a meeting of this body in February, 1791, a petition to parliament was proposed; but some respectable members, fearing to be suspected of revolutionary principles, refused their consent to that measure; and sixty-four of them, including lords Kenmare and Fingal, having seceded from the rest, presented an address to the viceroy, strongly expressing the respectful submission of themselves and the catholic body in general to government.

In the session of 1792, some new indulgences had been

<sup>16</sup> Fiats, or warrants, were issued by judges against persons charged with libels; and such excessive bail demanded, as subjected them to long confinement in prison. This punishment was particularly inflicted on John Magee, printer of the Dublin Evening Post.



granted to the papists ;<sup>17</sup> but the majority of the committee, not satisfied with partial concessions, still persevered in their pursuit of a redress of grievances. In order to lay before government the sentiments of the collective body of catholics, they fixed on the plan of a convention of delegates from the several towns and counties, to be elected by persons deputed, two from each parish : the committee also thought it right to make a public disavowal of dangerous tenets respecting the excommunication of princes, the persecution of heretics, the violation of oaths, particularly that of allegiance, the infallibility of the pope, &c. they also solemnly renounced all claim to forfeited estates, and all designs of subverting the protestant establishment.

Such declarations were necessary to confirm the attachment of their friends, who lay chiefly among the dissenters and united Irishmen : many protestants, however, suspicious of their sincerity, were averse to granting them any share of political power ; and passed resolutions, not only hostile to their claims, but condemning their plan of convention as seditious. The convention, nevertheless, met on the third of December, 1792 ; and, after various displays of eloquence, voted a petition to the king, stating the grievances, patience, and long-tried loyalty of his catholic subjects ; but dwelling particularly on their deprivation of the elective franchise, which they styled their ‘ prime and heavy grievance, the cause and bitter aggravation of all their calamities.’ Five deputies, appointed to present this petition, proceeded to London, and were introduced by secretary Dundas to the king, who received them in a very gracious manner : and when the Irish parliament met on the tenth of January, 1793, he pressed on its attention such measures as might be most likely to strengthen and cement a general union of sentiment among all classes and descriptions of his catholic subjects, in support of the established constitution. With this view, the bill of relief was brought into the house of commons by secretary Hobart, early in March : its chief clause enabled the catholics to exercise and enjoy all civil and military offices ; all places of trust or profit under the crown ; and also the *elective franchise*, under certain restrictions ; preventing a Roman catholic from sitting or voting in either house of parliament, as well as from filling the office of lord lieutenant, lord chancellor, or judge in either of the three courts

<sup>17</sup> Such as admission to the practice of the law, full liberty of education, and intermarriage with protestants.



of record and admiralty, keeper of the privy seal, secretary of state, lieutenant or *custos rotulorum* of a county, privy counsellor, master in chancery, general on the staff, sheriff, or sub-sheriff, &c. The bill passed with few dissentient voices ; for many, who were averse to its principle, voted in its favor ; and though it fell short of complete emancipation, it was supposed to be all that the executive government could at that time grant without too violent an exertion : accordingly, it was received with gratitude ; and as a farther concession to Ireland, a libel bill, similar to that of England, was passed ; the power of the crown to grant pensions on the Irish establishment was limited to the sum of £80,000 ; and certain descriptions of placemen and pensioners were excluded from the house of commons : also, his majesty declared his acceptance of a limited sum, fixed at £225,000, for the expenses of his civil list, in lieu of the hereditary revenues of the crown. Opposition having been mollified by this conciliatory conduct, certain measures, necessary for the safety of the country in these perilous times, were carried without difficulty : alien and traitorous correspondence bills, analogous to those of England, were passed ; also one to prevent arms and ammunition from being imported, or kept, without license ; and another, ‘ to prevent the election or appointment of assemblies, purporting to represent the people, or any number of the people, under pretence of preparing or presenting petitions and addresses to the king, or either house of parliament, for the alteration of matters established by law, or redress of alleged grievances in church or state.’

In the present session a bill also passed for raising by ballot a militia of 16,000 men, to serve for the period of four years. As each person on whom the lot fell was obliged to serve, unless he could procure a substitute, or pay a large fine, the measure was considered as a very heavy grievance : to alleviate this burden, subscriptions for raising recruits were adopted, and insurance-offices established, to indemnify individuals on the payment of a stated sum : it was not, however, without considerable trouble that recruits in this case could be raised ; for the common people had not a perfect reliance on the government, on account of a circumstance which occurred in the American war ; when a regiment, which had been raised under an express agreement that it was not to be sent out of the kingdom, was, in defiance of the contract, sent to the colonies : hence it was apprehended that the militia would be treated in the same manner ; so that discontents were occasioned, and



riots produced, which cost the lives of many persons. A set of insurgents, called 'defenders,' unconnected with this business, had risen of late years to such a pitch, as to attract the notice of parliament; and a secret committee of the lords in this session made a report of their proceedings, as well as those of the united Irishmen. The defenders had succeeded the white-boys, but were not, like them, confined to a particular quarter: they arose about the year 1784, from a quarrel between some catholics and protestants, in the county of Armagh; the former of whom, being possessed of arms, overcame their opponents: enraged at their defeat, the protestants of the lower classes began to take arms from the catholics, and styled themselves 'peep-of-day boys,' from their breaking into the houses of their antagonists in search of arms at a very early hour in the morning: the others, on the contrary, strove to prevent them, and called themselves defenders; but in the year 1789 they seem to have been regularly organised, prepared for assault as well as defence; and, becoming private aggressors, had committed some atrocious murders. At the time when the committee made its report, they had extended their associations through the counties of Louth, Meath, Cavan, Monaghan, and other neighboring districts: assembling by night to learn the use of arms, they went through their evolutions under noted leaders of infamous character, and committed every species of crime; breaking open houses, seizing arms, money, or effects, and murdering the loyal inhabitants, especially the established clergy: at length, they spread to remote counties, such as Kerry, Wexford, and Limerick; so that, in many parts of the country, gentlemen were obliged to leave their houses, or turn them into a species of fortification, and place soldiers there for defence. The sixteenth of August terminated this eventful session, in which the bill so anxiously desired by the catholics was passed, but which failed to produce the effects that were anticipated: in fact, the principle of contention still remained in full force. Before the relaxation of the *penal laws*, at the commencement of the present reign, the Roman catholics of Ireland could scarcely be considered as forming a part of its people: before the present year, which saw them vested with the *elective franchise*, they did not form a part of its citizens: henceforth the question between them and the protestants was, whether they should form a part of its government.

A convention had been signed on the twenty-fifth of March, between our court and that of St Petersburg, for the



prosecution of hostilities, until the French should relinquish all their conquests; while Hesse Cassel and Sardinia were engaged by subsidies, the former to supply 8000 men,<sup>18</sup> and the latter to keep up an army of 50,000 for its own defence, and for general service against the enemy: soon afterwards, an alliance was adjusted with Spain and Naples; and still later in the year with Prussia, Austria, Portugal, and Tuscany. Thus were the various states of Europe brought into combination against revolutionary France, England being the central point of union: no other power could supply the pecuniary resources that were required; she therefore obtained the chief direction of the war, though not intirely suited for it by geographical position or common interests: causes, however, existed, which rendered this coalition, as well as others which succeeded it, liable to dissolution: most of the allied powers lost sight of the original object of their confederacy amidst views of aggrandisement; the prospect of acquisitions at the expense of a neighbor, or even of an ally, became an inducement to defection: neither did any great leader arise on the side of the confederates, like William III. or Marlborough, at once a statesman and a soldier: but talent was assailed by envy; and energy was repressed by the bigoted obstinacy of ancient courts;—while among the revolutionary ranks, intrepidity, intelligence, and ardor were sure of their reward, and valiant men of the lowest grade rose rapidly to the highest honors: such were the circumstances under which this war began, which was in reality a conflict of political elements more than of arms; for, as far as the armies of the republic penetrated, express decrees announced the introduction of the sovereignty of the people. The danger, however, seemed to be diminished in the first campaign, as it was not long before the successes of the allies confined the French armies once more to their own territory: rarely, however, has victory ever proved more fatal to the conquerors: it called forth the resistance of despair; and the reign of terror, which soon followed, with all its cruelties and all its vigor, sanctioned a maxim far more important than a series of victories,—‘that every citizen is a soldier.’ This at once annihilated the system of standing armies in France, and gave a new aspect to military affairs. What, indeed, but the energy thus infused into the mass, could have enabled the republic to withstand the enemies by which she was opposed?

In the beginning of this campaign, France had to combat

<sup>18</sup> Subsequently extended to 12,000.



55,000 Austro-Sardinians from the Alps; 50,000 Spaniards from the Pyrenees; 66,000 Austrians or imperialists reinforced by 38,000 Anglo-Batavians on the Lower Rhine and in Belgium; 33,000 Austrians between the Meuse and the Moselle; 112,000 Russians, Austrians, Prussians, and imperialists on the Middle and Upper Rhine: to make head against these formidable enemies, the convention ordered a levy of 300,000 troops, and at the same time established a committee of public safety,<sup>19</sup> with dictatorial power over persons and property, for the support of that revolution which their troops were sent to defend on the frontiers. In the mean time, Dumouriez was occupied with an ambitious plan of reaction, when he ought to have considered nothing but the dangers with which France was surrounded: instead of remaining neutral between the factions, as was the duty of a general, he proposed, in spite of the convention and of assembled Europe, to establish the constitutional monarchy of 1791, after having first delivered Belgium from the rule of the jacobins, secured Holland by aid of the Batavian republicans, and united those two countries into a single state.

Instead of defending the line of the army which was menaced from Mayence to the Roer, Dumouriez threw his forces to the left of the enemy's operations, and entered Holland at the head of 20,000 men: advancing vigorously, he took Breda and Gertruydenburg, and then prepared to attack Dort; but in the mean time, the army on the right experienced great disasters: the Austrians, under the prince of Saxe Coburg, assuming the offensive, passed the Roer, and gained a complete victory at Aix la Chapelle. The discomfited French made a precipitate retreat to Liege, and their consternation extended to the camp of general Miranda, who was then blockading Maestricht, the siege of which he raised, and took refuge in Brabant: the victorious Austrians then crossed the Meuse, and intirely routed the French armies which had united between Tirlemont and Louvain. Dumouriez received orders from the executive council to quit Holland with all speed, and take the command in Belgium; and thus he was obliged to give up his wildly cherished scheme of ambition.

Having concentrated his forces to oppose the prince of Saxe Coburg, and addressed a threatening letter to the convention against the jacobins who had denounced him, he hazarded a

<sup>19</sup> Consisting of Robespierre, Carnot, St. Just, Barrere, and seven others.



general engagement at Nerwinde, and lost the battle: Belgium was evacuated; and the French general, beaten by the Austrians, and attacked by the jacobins, recurred to the culpable means of defection, in order to realise his favorite projects: he held conferences with colonel Mack, and arranged with the Austrians to march on Paris, for the restoration of the monarchy; while he was to quit them on the frontier, leaving several strong places in their hands as a guarantee. The jacobins, informed of his intentions, and wishing to make themselves more certain of the facts, sent a deputation of three members, who obtained from him a plain acknowledgement of his intention to restore a constitutional monarchy by means of the army: he soon, however, found himself in a very difficult position; for the soldiers, though they were attached to their general, were still more devoted to their country. His first attempt therefore turned out very discouraging; for, after establishing his camp at St. Amand, he failed in seizing on Lille, Condé, and Valenciennes, the strong places which he was desirous of giving up as a guarantee to the Austrians.

As soon as the convention was informed of the general's projects, it summoned him to their bar; and when he refused to obey, they despatched four representatives, together with the minister at war, to bring him before them, or to arrest him in the midst of his army. Dumouriez received the commission at the head of his staff, but refused to quit his troops; though he promised, that at a calmer time, he would demand an investigation of his conduct, and give an explanation both of his actions and his designs. The commissioners entreated him to submit, alleging the example of the ancient Roman generals. To this Dumouriez replied,—‘We are always wrong, and we degrade the history of the Romans, when we quote the example of their virtues as an excuse for our crimes. The Romans did not murder Tarquin: the Romans had a well-regulated republic and good laws: they had neither a club of jacobins, nor a revolutionary tribunal. We live in times of anarchy: a band of tigers desire my head, and I do not wish to give it them.’—‘Citizen general,’ said Camus, one of the commissioners, ‘will you obey the decree of the national convention, and accompany us to Paris?’—‘Not now.’—‘Well, then, I declare you suspended from your functions: you are no longer general; and I command you to be taken into custody.’—‘This is too much,’ said Dumouriez: and he instantly ordered his German hussars to seize the commissioners, whom he transmitted to the Austrians, to be kept as hostages.



After this act of revolt, it was necessary to make some attempt : he, therefore, renewed his attack on Condé ; but it was again unsuccessful : he wished to induce the army to follow him in his defection ; but its attachment to the principles of the revolution kept it firm in its duty ;<sup>20</sup> and Dumouriez, in opposing the convention, experienced the same fate which la Fayette underwent, when he declared himself against the constituent assembly : he passed over to the Austrian camp, with the duc de Chartres,<sup>1</sup> colonel Thouvenot, and two squadrons of Berchiny : the rest of his army joined the camp at Famars, under Dampierre, who was now invested with the chief command.

No sooner were these proceedings known at Paris, than the convention declared its sittings permanent, denounced Demouriez as a traitor, fixed a price on his head, banished all the Bourbons, and created that celebrated committee of public safety, which was destined to complete the crimes and destroy the chief authors of the revolution : a short time previously, the dreadful revolutionary tribunal had been instituted, together with numerous commissions, destined to execute despotic power in the different departments of France.

The defection of Dumouriez to the Austrians gave the violent revolutionists an immense advantage. Though the Girondists had inveighed against the traitor as fiercely as the Mountainists, yet these latter accused them of being accomplices in his desertion : Robespierre attacked by name Brissot, Guadet, Vergniaud, Petion, and Gensonné, in the convention ; while the ferocious Marat denounced them in the popular assemblies : for this he was accused before the revolutionary tribunal ; but was acquitted, and carried victoriously to the assembly, when the mob insisted on marching in triumph through the hall. The commission of twelve, to which the plots of their enemies gave rise, appeared to promise advantage to the Girondists ; but it served only to excite their adversaries more violently : fierce tumults took place in the assembly, and frightful commotions in the city, where the clubs of the jacobins, the cordeliers, and the revolutionary sections sat day and night. On the twenty-fifth of May, a furious multitude assembled at the hall of the convention ; and a deputation appeared at the bar, loudly demanding the suppression of the commission of

<sup>20</sup> ' We thank you for having reduced us to the necessity of conquering,' was the answer of one of the armies to the convention, in reply to its announcement of the death of the king.

<sup>1</sup> The present king of the French.



twelve, and the liberation of the infamous Hebert, who had been imprisoned as the leader of a plot to destroy the Girondists. These proposals were strenuously resisted; and the ferocious Danton thundered out,—‘So much impudence is beyond endurance: we will resist you: let there be no longer any truce between the Mountain, and the base men who wished to save the tyrant.’ After this, the Girondists could not long sustain the conflict with the jacobins, backed by the sanguinary multitude; the second of June delivered them into the power of their enemies, who had surrounded the hall of the assembly with 80,000 men, under the command of Henriot; thirty of the principal members being arrested at the instigation of Marat, and by the denunciation of Couthon. Thus the political career of the Girondists, more culpable for their rashness than for their intentions, ended in that storm which their eloquence had created, but which their wisdom could not allay: henceforward they were known only as individuals, by their noble and courageous bearing in the midst of calamity and death.

On the fall of this party, the revolutionary government was formed. The tyrant Robespierre, who directed all acts in the committee of public safety, was now dictator; while his associates<sup>2</sup> divided the departments among themselves: and the general superintendence of the police was vested in a committee of general safety, subordinate to the former, but still possessed of very formidable authority. One of the first results of this new order of things, was a change in the divisions of the year, the names of the months, and of the days; and this republican calendar soon led to the abolition of public worship. In the mean time, Marat fell by the poniard of the enthusiastic Charlotte Corday, who vainly fancied that she could destroy the party by taking off its principal leader: Lyons, Marseilles, and Bourdeaux took up arms; and more than sixty departments joined the insurrection in favor of the Girondists. In most of these places, however, the royalists, who at first presented themselves under the guise of republicans, ended by creating a party in their own character; and the commotion no longer operated in favor of the Girondists, but of the counter-revolutionists. Their example was followed at Nismes, Montauban, and Toulon; which latter city surrendered itself, with all its ships and arsenals, to the com-

<sup>2</sup> These were St. Just, Couthon, Billaud, Varennes, Collot d’Herbois, Carnot, Cambon, and Barrere.



bined British and Spanish squadrons. In the Calvados, the insurrection became distinguished by the same spirit of royalism, which had been for some time flaming forth in La Vendée, and which had conducted the heroic inhabitants of that celebrated district to several important victories.

Every thing at this time seemed conspiring to overthrow the republican government: its armies were beaten in the north, and at the Pyrenees: at the same moment, it was threatened by the Lyonnese in the centre, the Marseillaise in the south, the Girondists in one part of the west, and the Vendéans in another. That reaction among the forces, which had taken place after the brilliant campaign of the Argonne and the Netherlands, had, in consequence of disagreement between the army and the government, become more decided; especially since the defection of the general-in-chief. After the junction of the army which Dumouriez had deserted, with that under Dampierre at Famars, a variety of partial, though severe engagements took place, in which no decisive advantage was gained on either side: on the eighth of May, however, Dampierre advanced to dislodge a large body of troops posted near the wood of Vicoigne; but exposing himself to the enemy's fire, his thigh was carried off by a cannon ball, and he died on the following day. In this action the English troops were first engaged, and behaved with great intrepidity; but through the inexperience of the duke of York, who was sent out to command armies on the credit of having seen a few reviews in Hyde Park, they were ordered to attack a strong post in the wood, and suffered much from exposure to the fire of some masked batteries. Condé being invested, and the siege of Valenciennes contemplated, the allies determined to attack the fortified camp of Famars, which covered that important place: at daybreak, therefore, on the twenty-third of May, the British and Hanoverians, under the duke of York, with the Austrians and imperialists, under the prince of Coburg and general Clairfait, assaulted and drove in the advanced posts of the enemy; who, during the night, abandoned their camp, and left Valenciennes open to the besiegers. On the first of June, general Custine arrived to take the command of the army, but was unable to relieve the place: the trenches were opened on the fourteenth; and, about the beginning of July, near 200 pieces of heavy artillery were placed in battery: mines and countermines innumerable were formed during this memorable siege, and various were the subterranean conflicts that occurred beneath the combatants



who fought in open air. On the night, however, of the twenty-fifth, the besiegers sprung some mines with complete success under the glacis and horn-work of the fortress, which favorable opportunity the allied forces instantly seized, to make themselves masters of the covered way: next day, the place surrendered, and the duke of York took possession of it, in the name of the emperor of Germany. Nearly at the same time, the garrison of Condé yielded themselves prisoners of war, after enduring the extremity of famine; and Mayence also submitted to the Prussian arms.

On the eighth of August, the French were driven from a strong position, near the Scheldt, called Cæsar's camp; after which, a council of war was held, where it was determined that the British, Hanoverians, Dutch, and Hessians should form a distinct army, independent of the Austrians: the plan was strongly opposed by the prince of Saxe Coburg and Clairfait; but the British forces, amounting with allies to 35,000 men, under their youthful commander, decamped on the eighteenth of August, and moved towards Dunkirk: 45,000 of the imperialists sat down before Quesnoy, and the remainder of their vast army was broken into detachments for the sake of communication.

To this fatal division of forces may be ascribed the disasters of the campaign: had they held together, and pushed on vigorously against the masses of the enemy, now severely weakened and depressed by defeat, there can scarcely be a doubt that the object of the war would have been gained. The levies *en masse* had not yet been decreed by the convention, and the forces they produced were not organised for three months: the mighty genius of Carnot had not as yet assumed the helm of affairs; the committee of public safety had not yet acquired its terrible energy; every thing promised great results to vigorous and simultaneous operations. 'The impartial historian,' says Mr. Alison, 'must confess with a sigh that British interests here interfered with the great objects of the war; and that by compelling the English contingent to separate for the siege of Dunkirk, England contributed to postpone for twenty years its glorious termination. Posterity has had ample room to lament the error: a war of twenty years deeply checkered with disaster, the addition of £600,000,000 to the public debt, the sacrifice of millions of brave men, may be distinctly traced to this one unhappy resolution.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> History of Europe during the French Revolution, vol. ii. p. 156.



The Austrians were successful in their enterprise; and after fifteen days, the garrison of Quesnoy capitulated; but a different fate awaited the British army. On the eighteenth of August, the duke of York arrived in the vicinity of Menin, where several severe contests took place; and the post of Lincelles, lost by the Dutch, was recovered by a gallant charge of the English guards, led on by general Sir John Lake. His royal highness then moved towards Dunkirk, and opened the trenches before that fortress on the twenty-fourth: the works were in a deplorable condition; and the garrison, consisting of only 3000 men, was wholly insufficient to defend the place: but England had not yet learned, or rather had not yet recovered her knowledge of, the military art: immense preparations had been making for the siege of a town which had long been the object of our maritime jealousy, and eleven new battalions had been embarked in the Thames for the besieging army; but so tardy were their movements, that not a vessel appeared to protect our land forces from the harassing discharges of the enemy's contemptible gun-boats. Above three weeks were employed in preparations for this siege; a delay, which enabled the French to bring up from a distant frontier the forces which ultimately raised it.

The republican rulers, following the wise plan of accumulating an overwhelming force on the decisive point, brought 35,000 men, by rapid marches, from the armies of the Rhine and Moselle, and placed them, with 15,000 already in the vicinity of Dunkirk, under the command of general Houchard. The investment of the place not being completed, he threw into it 10,000 of his best troops; and then opposed the covering army of Dutch and Austrians, with an attacking force of nearly double its numbers.

The situation of these allied forces was such as to offer every chance of success to a concentrated attack. Marshal Freytag's corps was not posted at Furnes, so as to protect the rear of the besiegers; but at a considerable distance in front of it, to prevent any communication between the besieged and the interior of France: the Dutch, under the prince of Orange, were at Menin, a distance of three days' march; and the duke of York's force lay exposed to attack between the separated bodies. The committee of public safety had enjoined Houchard to throw himself boldly between these corps, and fall on them successively; but he contented himself with advancing against the front of Freytag's, with a view of throwing them on the besieging army and raising the siege,



instead of interposing his forces, and destroying them both. The object was important, and it succeeded ; for Houchard, after several engagements, made a decisive attack on his opponent near Hondscote, in which the latter was defeated with the loss of 1500 men. Meanwhile, the garrison of Dunkirk made a vigorous sally ; and the duke of York, finding his flank exposed to the attack of Houchard, from the defeat of the covering army, withdrew from the lines by night on the eighth of September, leaving fifty-two pieces of cannon, with a large quantity of ammunition and baggage, in the hands of the conquerors.

This success excited great joy at Paris, and soon changed the face of the war, from the German ocean to the Mediterranean sea ; for the convention, relieved from the immediate danger of invasion, had now time to mature its plans of conquest, and to organise its immense military masses in the interior of the country. Houchard, however, did not improve his success ; for, neglecting to concentrate his forces, and attack the English, he renewed the system of division, which had been imprudently adopted by his adversaries ; and after a series of actions with detached corps of the allies, and gaining one victory over the Dutch, he was defeated at Courtray by general Beaulieu, and driven behind the Lys : besides, the panic communicated itself to all the divisions ; and the army, which had so lately raised the siege of Dunkirk, sought shelter, in a promiscuous crowd, under the cannon of Lisle ; a striking proof of the present unfitness of the republican levies for grand operations in combined masses ; and of the ease with which the allies, if they had been able to emancipate themselves from the old system of tactics, or if they had been led on by a commander of military genius, might have overrun the territories of the republic.

This last disaster proved fatal to Houchard ; for being accused by his own officers, he was brought before the revolutionary tribunal, condemned, and executed. ‘ The proceedings of the convention,’ says Mr. Alison,<sup>4</sup> ‘ against this unfortunate general, are chiefly interesting from the evidence they afford of the clear perception which those at the head of affairs had obtained of the principles in the military art, to which the subsequent successes of the republican forces were mainly owing. ‘ For long,’ said Barrere, ‘ the principle established by the great Frederic has been recognised ; that the best way to take ad-

<sup>4</sup> vol. ii. p. 162.



vantage of the courage of the soldiers, is to accumulate the troops in particular points in large masses : instead of doing this, you have divided them into separate detachments, and the generals entrusted with their command have usually had to combat superior forces. The committee of public safety, fully aware of the danger, had sent the most positive instructions to the generals to fight in large masses : you have disregarded their orders, and consequently reverses have followed.' From these expressions, it is not difficult to recognise the influence which the master mind of Carnot had already acquired in the direction of military affairs.'

The allies now sat down before Maubeuge ; an important fortress, the possession of which would have opened the capital to invasion ; and which, if it had been undertaken earlier, and with combined forces, might have put a finishing stroke to the war : Landrecy was already blockaded ; and the French troops, inferior to their foes, were concentrated within their own frontiers. A vigorous effort was necessary, and it was made by the committee of public safety : the whole of France was declared in a state of siege ; and the authorities were empowered to take all steps necessary for the public defence : innumerable battalions of conscripts were enrolled, and the possession of many fortified towns and intrenched camps afforded means of organising and disciplining the tumultuary masses. At the head of the whole was placed general Jourdan, a young officer as yet untried, but who, like thousands of his subordinates, was glad to take refuge with the army, from the horrors of revolutionary frenzy at home.

The force of the allies was still above 120,000 strong ; but after the besieging corps and those stationed at a distance were deducted, not more than half that number could be brought into action. This army, early in October, was concentrated between Maubeuge and Avennes, where it awaited the approach of the enemy, who had received peremptory orders to make the attack without delay, and drive them out of the French territory. The duke of York, hearing of the concentration of the republican forces, was rapidly advancing with 25,000 men ; and unless the attack was speedily made, it was certain that his force would be joined to the allied army. Impelled by various motives, Jourdan advanced against the Austrian position, the key of which was the village of Wattignies ; and a general action took place on the fifteenth of October, in which the republicans were worsted, with a loss of 1200 men. Instructed by this failure, Jourdan changed his method of attack ; accu-



mulated his forces in the night, and on the sixteenth at break of day, assailed Wattignies with three columns, and a concentric fire of artillery: with forces so disposed, he speedily carried the village; while the appearance of his reserve, on the left flank of Saxe Coburg, completed the discouragement of that commander, and induced him to retreat, after losing 6000 of his best troops: the resolution was an unfortunate one; for on other points he was eminently successful; and the duke of York, being within a day's march, would have joined him, had he kept his position: so incompetent were the imperialists to contend with the new system, which the genius of Carnot had introduced into the French armies, and which their immense levies enabled them to execute with reckless audacity. The siege of Maubeuge being thus raised, nothing more of importance was undertaken in Flanders, and both parties went into winter quarters: the prince of Saxe Coburg established himself at Bavay; the republicans formed a large intrenched camp at Guicè, for the protection and discipline of the numerous recruits that were hastening to the army; while the committee of public safety removed Jourdan from the chief command, and conferred it on Pichegru, a favorite of Robespierre and St. Just, who had all the talent, energy, and enterprise which the times demanded.

Dearly did England now pay for the fatal reduction of her military forces: with an army amounting to little more than 30,000 men, what could she effect against the energies of revolutionised France? and how precious were the opportunities lost by this deficiency of military strength! In the present instance, the capture of Dunkirk, by permitting the advance of the allied armies, might have paralysed all the efforts of the convention, and determined at once the success of the war. Again, in La Vendée, where perils still more imminent than those on the eastern frontiers threatened the revolutionary government; and the heroic inhabitants of that district were assembled in Brittany, waiting the arrival of British troops, in order to improve their victories, and *march on Paris*;—so dilatory were our succors, that they were obliged to disperse, and finally succumb to their inveterate and blood-thirsty enemies.<sup>5</sup>

After the capture of Mayence, the imperialists, reinforced by 40,000 excellent troops, might have opposed 100,000 men to 80,000 of the enemy: but though every thing promised success

<sup>5</sup> See Alison, vol. ii. p. 283.



to vigorous exertions, the allies, paralysed by intestine divisions, remained for two months in complete inactivity; the jealousy of the sovereigns concerning the affairs of Poland, being equalled by the rivalry of the generals for the command of the armies.<sup>6</sup> Even when Moreau, with the army of the Moselle, made an attack on the Prussians at Permasins, and was obliged to retreat from the terrible fire of their artillery, with a loss of 4000 men and 22 pieces of cannon; the allied commanders neglected to improve a disaster which might have led to final success. A few days afterwards, the king of Prussia, intent on spoliation, hurried off to Poland, where his aid was required to assist the czarina in her base designs against that unhappy country.

The allies, having at length agreed on a plan of operations, determined to attack the lines of Weissenburg, constructed in former times to protect the Rhenish frontier, in which the French were strongly posted: an assault was accordingly made on the left by the Prussians, under the duke of Brunswick; while the Austrians, under prince Waldeck, crossed the Rhine, to turn the right; and Wurmser, with the main body, endeavored to force the centre. The attack on the right, by Lauterburg, obtained only a momentary success; but Wurmser carried several redoubts, and took possession of Weissenburg; when, the left having been turned and forced back, the whole army retired in confusion: such, however, was the inactivity of the allies, that in this general rout the French lost only 1000 men; and although Alsace was laid open to the victorious enemy, no advantages resulted from it; but rather a breach was effected between Austria and Prussia, from the designs of the former power on this important province being made manifest. Though a powerful party was formed among the nobles to favor the imperial projects, nothing material was undertaken by the armies: Wurmser lost the favorable moment in festivity and rejoicings; while the convention recovered from its alarm, and took energetic measures to restore revolutionary enthusiasm in these shaken districts. Wurmser, in the mean time, advanced to Strasburg, which the constituted authorities would have surrendered to him in the name of Louis XVII.; but he refused to take possession on those terms; and after an unsuccessful attempt against the republicans at Saverne, he was obliged to

<sup>6</sup> Alison, vol. ii. p. 168.



withdraw, and confine his operations to the blockade of Landau and siege of fort Vauban; abandoning Strasburg to republican vengeance, which was soon let loose against the miserable royalists.<sup>7</sup> It now plainly appeared, that the emperor of Germany, under pretence of placing the Bourbon family on the throne, was chiefly anxious to recover for himself the provinces which his ancestors had been obliged to cede to France.

The committee of public safety acted on a very different plan from that of the allies. To raise the blockade of Landau, they quickly despatched 30,000 men from the armies of the Rhine and Moselle, under Pichegru, supported by 35,000 under general Hoche, with orders to penetrate the enemy's lines, between the cantonments of the Austrians and Prussians. After some partial actions, the republicans attacked the covering army of the duke of Brunswick in great force on the twenty-sixth of December, near the castle of Geisburg. A violent altercation took place between the commanders of the allies; in consequence of which, being vigorously attacked in their centre, they were driven from their positions, and forced over the Rhine, after having raised the siege of Landau, and completely evacuated the French territory. Spire, Worms, and Vauban were soon recovered; the French armies, rapidly advancing, appeared before Mannheim; and Germany, so recently victorious, began to tremble for the safety of its own frontier.

Strange to say, the most energetic opponents, with whom the republicans had to contend in this campaign, were the Spaniards, by whom two considerable armies were formed; one of 30,000 men, to invade Roussillon; the other of 25,000, to penetrate France on the side of Bayonne. On the fourteenth of April, this latter force opened a brisk fire against the French lines near the western entrance of the Pyrenees, and crossed the Bidassoa: on the first of May, they drove the French from one of their intrenched camps, taking fifteen pieces of cannon; and on the sixth of June, after storming another camp, and taking all its cannon and ammunition, they forced the republicans into St. Pied de Port: having fortified

<sup>7</sup> Seventy persons of the most distinguished families of Strasburg were immediately put to death. It was a sufficient ground for condemnation, that any inhabitant had remained in a village occupied by the allies; and a fourth of the families of the province, decimated by the guillotine, fled to Switzerland. Alison, vol. ii. p. 171.



some posts in the country, they repulsed a very vigorous attack on the twenty-ninth of August; and so crippled the enemy, that he could undertake no movement of consequence for the remainder of the campaign. Operations of still greater importance took place on the eastern side, where the Spaniards, under Don Ricardos, gained several important victories, passed Perpignan, and interrupted the communication between Roussillon and Languedoc. Alarmed at the rapid progress of this foe, the convention took vigorous measures to reinforce their armies; and two divisions, about 15,000 strong, were ordered to advance against a corps of 6000 Spaniards under Don Juan Courten: this attack was combined with so much skill, that the Spaniards were assailed at once in front, rear, and both flanks; and, after a gallant defence, retreated with great loss. Elated by this success, the republicans assaulted their camp at Truellas, advancing against it with 20,000 chosen troops in three columns: that which attacked the centre, under Dagobert, carried the intrenchments, and was on the point of gaining a glorious victory; when Courten, coming up with the Spanish reserve, prolonged the conflict, till Don Ricardos, who had defeated the attack on his left, arrived with the cavalry, and decided the fate of the battle: three French battalions laid down their arms; and the remainder retired, in squares, though not without a loss of 4000 men and ten pieces of cannon. For this disaster, Dagobert was displaced from the supreme command, which was conferred on Davoust; who, being reinforced by 15,000 men, compelled his antagonist to act on the offensive, and retire to a strongly intrenched camp near Boulon, from whence the French were unable to dislodge him. In the beginning of December, however, Ricardos, having received considerable reinforcements, attacked the lines of the republicans, and routed the whole army, with a loss of 46 pieces of artillery and 2500 men: this success he followed up by the capture of Port Vendre, and Collioure, which latter place was defended by eighty pieces of cannon; while the marquis Amarillas overthrew the right of Davoust's army, which became so much discouraged, that many battalions disbanded themselves, the national guards deserted their colors, and the general announced to the convention that he was left with only 8000 men. Had the Spanish commander been aware of the state of his opponents, he might have had the glory of restoring the cause of the allies: but, alas! the war had not yet brought out any talent on their side; and the history of all great generals,



from Alexander, Cæsar, and Hannibal, down to Marlborough, Napoleon, and Wellington, shows that skill in disposing troops on a field of battle is only one of the requisites in a commander. The arrival of reinforcements, sent from Toulon in the beginning of the next month, restored the balance between the contending forces; and France was rescued from peril in this quarter.

At the conclusion of the campaign last year, the French remained masters of Nice: an expedition of the republicans against Sardinia had failed; and when the season was sufficiently advanced, the Piedmontese army, more than 40,000 strong, was posted in the maritime Alps. In the beginning of June they were vigorously attacked by the republicans with 25,000 men, who, after some partial successes, were obliged to resume their positions, and remain on the defensive till the end of July: they then made themselves masters of the Col d'Argentière and the Col de Sauteron; whereby the utmost terror was excited at Turin, and that court prevented from sending succors to the siege of Lyons.

'The insurrection in this latter city,' says an able writer,<sup>8</sup> 'offered to the allies an opportunity of establishing themselves in the south of France, which could hardly have been hoped for. Had 60,000 regular troops descended from the Alps, and taken advantage of the effervescence which prevailed in Toulon, Marseilles, and Lyons, the consequences might have been incalculable: but such were the divisions among the allies, that this golden opportunity, never to recur, was neglected; and the court of Turin contented itself, during that unhoped-for diversion, with merely aiming at the expulsion of the French from the valleys of the Arc and the Isere. This was no difficult matter, as the Piedmontese were masters of the summits of Mont Cenis and the Little St. Bernard; while the French in the valleys beneath were severely weakened by detachments for the siege of Lyons. In the middle of August, the Sardinian columns descended the ravines of St. Jean de Maurienne and Mouliers, under the command of general Gordon; and after some trifling engagements, drove the republicans from these narrow winding valleys, and compelled them to take refuge under the cannon of Montmelian: but here terminated the success of their feeble invasion. Kellerman, hearing of the advance of the Sardinians, left the siege of Lyons to general Durnuy; and, hastily returning to Chamberry,

<sup>8</sup> Alison, vol. ii. p. 177.



roused the national guards to resist the enemy. At the moment when they were preparing to follow up their advantages, the French commander anticipated them by a brisk attack; and, after a feeble resistance, drove them from the whole ground they had gained, as far as the foot of Mont Cenis. Thus a campaign, from which, if boldly conducted, the liberation of all the south-east of France might have been expected, terminated, after an ephemeral success, in ultimate disgrace.'

To these inefficient operations of the allies the exertions of the French legislature formed a remarkable contrast. The insurrection against the Girondists, and the atrocities which succeeded it, excited great indignation in most of the departments, especially those of the south; which determined to resist the tumultuous tyranny of the capital. Marseilles, Toulon, and Lyons openly espoused the cause of the Gironde; and the contents in the latter city went on increasing till the middle of July, when the infamous Chalier and Riard, leaders of the jacobin club, were tried and executed: from that moment Lyons was declared in a state of insurrection; and most of the Girondist leaders,<sup>9</sup> perceiving that the royalists had gained an ascendancy, withdrew from the city.

The convention, as soon as it fell under the power of the jacobins, proceeded to the formation of the most democratic constitution that ever existed: thenceforward the committee of public safety, now composed of the decemvirs under Robespierre, exercised all the powers of government; ruling the provinces, generals, and armies with despotic sway by means of its commissioners, and exercising by the revolutionary tribunal supreme authority over every life and fortune: this power was exerted to a degree, at which humanity shudders, over the whole extent of France. A truer picture of the tyranny exercised in the provinces cannot be exhibited, than that which was drawn by one of the commissioners for the information of the convention. 'Every where,' said Laplanche, who had been sent to the department of Cher, 'I have made terror the order of the day; every where I have imposed heavy contributions on the rich and aristocrats: from Orleans I have extracted 50,000 francs; and in two days, at Bourges, I raised

<sup>9</sup> This party could never move without being counteracted by the revolutionists on one side, and the royalists on the other; it was that which contained most talent, but was most unfortunate in its position. Nantes, though decidedly in favor of the Girondists, resisted the Vendean royalists, and prevented their occupation of a city, which might have restored the cause of the constitution.



2,000,000 : where I could not appear in person, my delegates have amply supplied my place : I have dismissed all the federalists, imprisoned all the suspected, put all the sans culottes into authority : I have forcibly married all the priests ; every where electrified the hearts, and inflamed the courage of the people : I have passed in review numerous battalions of the national guard, to confirm their republican spirit ; and guillotined numbers of royalists. In a word, I have completely fulfilled my imperial mandate ; and acted every where as a warm partisan of the Mountain, and a faithful representative of the revolution.'

Meanwhile, the prisons in Paris were filled with all that yet remained of dignity or virtue in the republic ; and the assassination of the monster Marat produced an unfortunate result ; for, though it cut off one sanguinary wretch, it had the effect of endearing his memory and policy to the populace : the blow was also considered to have been directed by the Gironde, and afforded a pretext for condemning the imprisoned deputies. Up to this time, speakers of moderation had been listened to in the assembly ; but now feelings of increased irritation prevailed : during the trial of Charlotte Corday, a secret protest, signed by seventy-three deputies against the usurpation of the second of June, was discovered : they were all immediately arrested and thrown into prison ; from which time, the convention scarcely contained an element of resistance to the tyranny of the decemvirs : a decree of the assembly had vested the whole power of government in their hands, and they made no secret of its despotic nature. 'You have nothing now,' said St. Just, 'to dread from the enemies of freedom : all we have to do is to make its friends triumphant ; and that must be done at all hazards. In the critical situation of the republic, it is in vain to re-establish the constitution ; it would offer impunity to every attack on liberty, by wanting the force to repress it. You are too far removed from conspiracies to have the means of checking them ; the sword of the law must be entrusted to surer hands ; it must turn every where, and fall with the rapidity of lightning on all its enemies.' Dreadful as was this terrible declaration, it was still felt that the insupportable evils of anarchy could only be arrested by the sanguinary arm of despotism.

The revolutionary tribunal was now set to work with steadiness and despatch : domiciliary visits took place, in search of suspected persons ; and the prisons were filled in consequence. General Custine was one of the first victims of the



terrorists, and Marie Antoinette soon followed. The revolution of the thirty-first of May had been felt in its full severity by the prisoners in the Temple, as well as by all the other captives in France: the wretch Hebert insisted that the family of the tyrant should not be treated better than a family of sans-culottes: in consequence, a decree passed to withdraw from them every luxury and every comfort; nor was it long that the unfortunate queen had the consolation of beholding her son. She herself was transferred from the Temple to a common dungeon of the Conciergerie; and after two months, was brought to trial. Having there undergone the most unmanly insults, she was of course condemned; and on the sixteenth of October was conducted to the place of execution in a common cart, with her hands tied behind her, amidst the execrations of an infuriated mob. Sustained by christian hope, she looked with pity, rather than with indignation, on the wretches by whom she was surrounded; and having ascended the scaffold with a firm step, she submitted to her fate with a fortitude worthy of her race.

Decrees of the convention were now issued to suppress all established institutions; even those of charity were not spared; nor was it long before the decemvirs proceeded to destroy their former friends: Bailly, Barnave, Condorcet, and the duke of Orleans now fell: the overthrow of the Gironde extinguished the hopes of the republicans; the massacre of the constitutionalists set at rest the question of a limited monarchy: according to a prophecy of Vergniaud, the revolution, like Saturn, was successively devouring its own progeny. Two parties still remained opposed on different principles to the decemvirs, whose destruction was necessary to their absolute sway: these were the anarchists and the moderates: at the head of the former were Hebert, Chaumette, Cloutz, Ron-sin, &c., with the municipality of Paris: the latter were supported by Danton, Camille Desmoulins, Philippeaux, Fabre d'Eglantine, and Westermann: the principles of this latter party were, that terror was to be used only for the establishment of freedom, not made an instrument of oppression in the hands of tyrants. The anarchists carried the extravagance of cruelty, obscenity, and atheism far beyond even the decemvirs. Danton and his friends, especially Desmoulins, made great efforts to detach Robespierre from the sanguinary faction with whom he acted; and at first with an appearance of success: he had taken some steps towards a regular government, when he himself was accused of moderatism among the jacobins, and his



popularity became endangered. With all his fanaticism in favor of democracy, he felt the necessity of religious ties to curb the unruly passions of the people; and he saw that the principles of the municipality, if persisted in, would utterly disorganise society. With the sanguinary spirit of the times, he determined to suppress their infidel atrocities by extermination; but at the same time he thought it necessary to make a sacrifice to the revolutionists, in order to avoid the imputation of moderatism: hence he resolved to cut off the party that professed it, and thus to establish the supremacy of the committee of public safety over all factions in the state. An opportunity soon occurred: a furious quarrel arose between the anarchists and the moderates; when Robespierre and the municipality, profiting by the occasion, came to an understanding between themselves, the condition of which was a mutual abandonment of their friends: the former gave up Danton and his party to the vengeance of the municipality; the latter surrendered Hebert and his abettors to the decemvirs: the anarchists first fell, as cowardly in their deaths as they had been shameless in their lives. When Danton was arrested with his friends, his memorable words were,—‘I now perceive that in revolutions the supreme power rests with the most abandoned.’ At his condemnation, he observed, with a prophetic spirit,—‘We are sacrificed to the ambition of a few dastardly brigands; but they will not long enjoy their triumph: I drag Robespierre with me in my fall.’ After he fell, it was long before any voice was heard against the reign of terror which ensued. ‘Silent and unopposed, the tyrants struck redoubled blows from one end of France to the other: the Girondists had sought to avert that fatal rule; the Dantonists to arrest it: both perished in the attempt: they perished, because they were inferior in wickedness to their opponents; they fell victims to the humanity that lingered in their bosoms.’<sup>10</sup>

In the midst of this civil strife, of which the foregoing is but a brief and imperfect sketch, fear became the principal instrument in filling the ranks of the national armies; for the bayonets of the allies appeared less formidable than the guillotine of the convention: hence it was that republican government was able to oppose with effect such a variety of foes. We have already observed how the fall of the Girondists excited a spirit of opposition to that government in the departments and large cities of the kingdom: no where did this show itself with

<sup>10</sup> Alison, vol. ii. p. 107.



greater force than at Lyons and Marseilles. At the first intelligence, Kellerman, who commanded the army of the Alps, despatched general Carteaux to prevent a corps of 10,000 Marseillois from forming a junction with the volunteers from Lyons: had that been effected, probably the whole south of France would have thrown off the yoke of the convention; but Carteaux, after overawing Avignon and Pont d'Esprit, encountered and totally defeated the troops from Marseilles: he then entered the city, where terror resumed its sway; the prisons were emptied, the leaders of the Girondists thrown into confinement, and the guillotine installed with bloody pomp.

A large portion of the citizens of Marseilles, having fled to Toulon, carried thither the most frightful accounts of the sufferings of their own city, and the fate which awaited Toulon, if it should fall into the hands of the republicans: that flourishing seaport was strongly opposed to the revolution, and contained numbers of marine officers connected with the old government. Being threatened by the near approach of the enemy, and destitute of any adequate means of defence, its people saw no alternative but to open their harbor to the English fleet, then cruising in the bay, and to proclaim the dauphin as king: this accordingly was done; the British entered the harbor; and the crews of seven ships of the line, who proved refractory, were permitted to retire, while the others joined the inhabitants. Soon afterwards, the Spanish squadron arrived, bringing a reinforcement of troops; and the allied forces, 8000 strong, took possession of the forts. Carteaux ordered a detachment to march against the insurgents, which was repulsed and driven back in confusion; which check proved the necessity of more energetic measures. A large proportion of the army of Italy was recalled from the Alps; a new levy ordered; and the plan of Robespierre immediately acted on,—‘that Lyons must be rased to the ground, and then the siege of Toulon commence.’

During the whole of August and beginning of September, the siege made but little progress; yet the inhabitants sent proposals of accommodation, which were answered by the commissioners of the convention with an exhortation to lay down their arms and deliver up the keys of the city: the besieged, however, were too well aware of the fate which awaited them, to consent to such a proposal. Extraordinary efforts were now made: 100 pieces of cannon from the arsenals of Grenoble and Besançon were mounted in the batteries; veteran troops were selected from the army of Piedmont; and four divisions formed, which pressed the outworks of the city at



different points. In a series of contests at the outer works, the Lyonnese exhibited the most heroic valor; but the besiegers prevailed, and the horrors of war at length fell on this devoted place. The ravages of the bombardment that ensued were terrific: before the end of September, 40,000 men were collected before the walls; and the pangs of famine began to be felt: shortly afterwards, the garrison of Valenciennes arrived, and Couthon came up with more than 20,000 rude mountaineers from Auvergne.

The hopes of the citizens had chiefly rested on a diversion from the side of Savoy, where the Piedmontese troops were slowly assembling for offensive operations; but their expectations were cruelly disappointed in the disgraceful retreat of the Sardinian army, which thus failed in taking advantage of an opportunity more favorable for the royalist party in the south of France than was ever again to occur. Yet, though deserted by allies unworthy of the name, the inhabitants nobly maintained their defence against a bombardment which was continued with unexampled severity: but no efforts could finally avert their fate: the convention, irritated at the slow progress of the siege, displaced Kellerman from the command, which was given to general Doppet, who received orders to reduce Lyons instantly by fire and sword: besides, the savage Couthon was invested with despotic power over the generals, and he determined to storm the city with all the disposable forces. On the twenty-ninth of September, every intrenchment between the assailants and the besieged was in the possession of the former, and the last moment of Lyons seemed at hand: still they were driven back by the heroic Precy and his undaunted band with a loss of 2000 men: but all was in vain: famine prevailed; the city was obliged to capitulate; and on the tenth of October the republicans entered in triumph. The troops were made to observe strict discipline, and the inhabitants began to indulge a fleeting hope that humanity might touch the hearts of their conquerors: they little knew the bitterness of republican hatred. Lyons was not intended to be spared; it was only reserved for cold-blooded vengeance: a decree issued forth to abolish even the name of a city which had dared to war against freedom: a commission of five was appointed to inflict the punishment, at the head of which were Couthon and Collot d'Herbois; the former of whom was to preside over the destruction of the edifices; the latter, a fit instrument of revolutionary fury, over that of the inhabitants: ten years



before he had been hissed, as a wretched actor, off the stage of Lyons; and he now returned to gratify a revenge which had ever since been rankling in his bosom. Considering the daily execution of his victims by the guillotine as too tardy a display of that republican vengeance, which he declared ought to be as the 'explosion of a mine, the ravages of fire, or the rapidity of lightning,' he prepared a new and simultaneous method of punishment. Sixty captives, of both sexes, were led out, bound together, to the place of execution: they were there arranged in two files, with a deep ditch on each side, intended for their grave; while gendarmes, with uplifted sabres, threatened instant death to any who should stir from their position: at one extremity of the files, two cannons, loaded with grape shot, were placed so as to enfilade the whole; and at a given signal the discharge was made. Few were so fortunate as to obtain death at the first fire; the greater part were merely mutilated: broken limbs, torn off by the shot, were scattered in all directions, and the blood ran in torrents into the ditches: a second and a third discharge were insufficient to complete the work of destruction; until the gendarmes, unable to withstand the piercing shrieks of the victims, put an end to them by their sabres. At one time, more than 200 prisoners were tied together by a strong cord, which was made fast to trees in a large meadow, where numerous piquets of soldiers were disposed so as to commence a fusillade on them; while the fiends, Collot d'Herbois and Fouché,<sup>11</sup> enjoyed the spectacle at a distance through their telescopes. Another fusillade was executed, under the windows of an hotel on the quay, for the amusement of Fouché, who, with thirty jacobins and twenty courtesans, was engaged at dinner. During the course of five months, 6000 persons perished by the executioner, and more than double that number were driven into exile: the bodies of the slain were launched in such numbers into the Rhine, that its waters were poisoned, and the danger of a contagion at length obliged the monster Collot d'Herbois to commit them to the earth. With regard to the destruction of the edifices in this fine city, it was conducted in the following manner: Couthon, attended by a crowd of satellites, traversed the different quarters, and with a silver hammer struck at the door of each devoted house, at the same time exclaiming, 'Rebellious house, I strike thee in the name of the law;' on which, the agents of destruction instantly surrounded it, and

<sup>11</sup> Afterwards duke of Otranto.



levelled it to the ground. The palaces and public buildings thus demolished were among the finest in France; and the loss was estimated at more than £700,000. One of the first steps taken had been to close the churches, slay or banish the priests, and extinguish every vestige of religion. At a fête, given by Collot d'Herbois and Fouché in honor of the infamous Châlier, an ass was made to walk in procession, bearing the most sacred emblems of christian worship to an altar, on which an oath was taken to avenge the death of the republican Châlier by bloody sacrifices: at the same time, a fire was lighted on the altar, to which the crucifix and the gospel were committed; the consecrated bread was trampled under the feet of the mob, and the ass compelled to drink out of the communion cup: after this, the procession traversed the streets with an ambulatory guillotine, singing obscene songs, and exclaiming, *à bas les aristocrates! vive la guillotine!*

This recital may be sufficient to give the reader some idea of the atrocities committed by the French republicans; although even those at Lyons were greatly exceeded in other parts of France. The troops, which had been engaged in the siege of that unhappy city, were immediately removed to Toulon; twelve battalions of the army of Italy were added to their ranks; and soon more than 40,000 men were assembled under its walls. This city presented great difficulties to be overcome, being on the land side backed by a ridge of hills, surmounted by strong fortifications: these posts, however, though formidable to attacking forces, were sure, if taken, to become still more dangerous to the besieged, since the greater part of the city and harbor lay within range of their cannon; the hill of Faron and the Hauteur de Grasse were the principal points on which the defence of the place depended. An important pass in front of the works, called the defile of Ollioulles, had been early occupied by an English detachment; but its defence having been imprudently committed to some Spanish troops, Carteaux recovered it in the beginning of September, and the republican videttes were consequently pushed up to the external works of the city.

Every exertion was made, during the respite afforded by the siege, to strengthen the fortifications of the city; but the regular force was too small: the English did not exceed 5000 men; and little reliance could be placed on the motley crowd of Spaniards, Neapolitans, and Piedmontese, who composed the remainder of the garrison. The hopes of the inhabitants depended on powerful reinforcements from Austria



and England; but their expectations were miserably disappointed: in the mean time, fort Eguillette, at the extremity of the promontory which shuts in the lesser harbor, was strongly fortified; and though little could be said for the union of the commanders within the city, their enterprises in sallies and skirmishes were so far successful, that the French began to be alarmed at the slow progress of the siege; especially as a dearth of provisions was beginning to be felt: the commissioners, Barras and Freron, even wrote from Marseilles to the convention, advising that it should be raised, and the army withdrawn beyond the Durance: but while weaker minds were despairing, talents of the first order were at hand to achieve the conquest of Toulon. Napoleon Buonaparte, at this time a captain of artillery, was sent to the scene of action; and having visited the posts of the besieging army, could not conceal his surprise at the proofs of incapacity which he beheld: under his direction, a totally different plan was adopted by the council of war; and the young officer, by whom it was projected, received full powers to carry it into effect: he rallied round him many excellent artillery officers and soldiers; brought against the city more than 200 pieces of cannon; and stationed them so advantageously, as to annoy the English vessels in the roads, even before he had constructed those batteries on which he depended for reducing forts Mulgrave and Malbosquet, by which they were principally defended.

In the mean time, general Doppet, formerly a physician, had succeeded Carteaux, whose incapacity could be no longer concealed; and he, in his turn, being found incapable like his predecessor, was superseded by Dugommier, a veteran who had seen fifty years of service: from that time, the commander of artillery, having the full confidence of his general, had no doubt of success; to secure which he used the utmost vigilance and exertion, exposing his person to every risk in the service. On one of these occasions, it is related, that while he was superintending the construction of a battery, which the British endeavored to interrupt by their fire, he called out for some person who could write, as he wished to dictate an order: a young soldier instantly stepped from the ranks, and taking the paper, rested it on the breastwork, where he calmly executed his task: the letter, however, was scarcely finished, when a shot from the enemy's battery covered it with earth. 'Thank you,' said the military secretary; 'we shall not want sand this time.' The gaiety and courage of the remark fixed Buonaparte's attention on the young man, who



was the celebrated Junot, afterwards created duc d'Abrantes. During this siege, he also discovered the talents of his faithful adherent Duroc, by that sagacity, which enabled the future conqueror of Europe to remark and attach to himself those whose abilities were most capable of rendering him service.

Notwithstanding the influence which Napoleon had acquired, he still found his measures occasionally thwarted by the commissioners sent from the convention, Freron, Ricors, Salicetti, and the younger Robespierre : but he exerted all his patience ; and having the good opinion of the two latter, he contrived to conduct the works according to his own plan : the presumption, however, of these dignitaries, became the means of accelerating his operations. It was his intention to complete his works against fort Mulgrave before opening a large battery, which he had constructed with great secrecy against Malbosquet ; so that he might confound his adversaries by a more extended assault. The operations had been shrouded by an olive plantation ; but Messrs. Freron and Robespierre, in visiting the military posts, stumbled on this masked battery ; and having no notion that four large mortars and eight twenty-four pounders should remain idle, they ordered them instantly to open on Malbosquet.

General O'Hara, confounded at finding this important post exposed to so unexpected and formidable a fire, made a sally, with 3000 men, to carry the battery : it was at first successful ; but the English, in full confidence of victory, pursuing the discomfited foe too far, were attacked in turn by a strong body of troops which Napoleon had rallied : in the hot skirmish that ensued, he received a bayonet wound in the thigh ; but the English were thrown into irretrievable confusion, and forced back, leaving their general a prisoner in the hands of the enemy. It is singular, that, during his long warfare, Buonaparte was never personally engaged with the British, except in this his first, and in his last and fatal battle at Waterloo.

The whole force of the besiegers was now directed against the British redoubt, fort Mulgrave, in the centre of the works on the neck of land called Eguillette, which was considered the key of the defence at that quarter. After a long and incessant fire from five batteries, the republicans advanced to the assault on the seventeenth of December ; but were received with such a tremendous discharge of grape and musketry, that the ditch was filled with the dead and dying ; and Dugommier, as he saw the troops fly in confusion, exclaimed, ' I



am a lost man.' Renewed efforts with fresh forces, however, prevailed: the Spaniards, to whom part of the line was entrusted, gave way; the British detachment was surrounded; and 300 of them fell, gallantly maintaining their post. To defend the exterior works was now impracticable; accordingly, all the allied troops were withdrawn during the night from the promontory to the defence of the town. Nor were the republicans less successful at the other extremity of the line, where a general attack was made on the extensive range of posts which crowned the mountain of Faron. On the eastern side, indeed, they were repulsed; but on the north, where the hill is nearly 1800 feet in height, steep, rocky, and seemingly inaccessible, they made good their ascent; and when the allies were beginning to congratulate themselves on the defeat of what they deemed the main attack, they saw the heights above them bristling with bayonets, and the tricolor flag waving on the highest peak of the mountain.

These conquests, projected by the genius of Napoleon, decided the fate of Toulon; for the harbor was now untenable. Sir Samuel Hood alone, in a hurried council of war, strongly urged an immediate effort to regain the lost outworks; but his advice was overruled by the other officers: instant measures were accordingly taken for the evacuation of the place, which the panic of the foreign troops, especially the Neapolitans, would have rendered still more horrible than it proved, but for the admirable courage of the British seamen.

Dreadful now were the feelings of the wretched inhabitants: with anxious eyes they watched the embarkation of the British sick and wounded; and when the fatal truth could be no longer concealed, that they were about to be abandoned, despair and anguish wrung every heart: the streets were soon in a frightful state of confusion; in many, the jacobins were already firing on the flying bands of women and children; and the quays were soon filled with a miserable crowd loudly supplicating to be saved from their implacable foes; nor was any time lost in taking as many as possible into the vessels appointed for that purpose: upwards of 14,000 persons accepted this melancholy refuge.

It had been resolved that the arsenal and naval stores, with such ships as were not ready for sea, should be destroyed: this was a service of great danger; for the republicans were fast pressing on the retreating forces of the besieged, and their shot already began to plunge into the harbor. The task was entrusted to the dauntless intrepidity of Sir Sidney Smith, who



executed it with a degree of order and precision that seemed marvellous under existing circumstances. At midnight he proceeded to the arsenal, where he found a large body of galley-slaves, mostly unfettered, and disposed to dispute his entrance into the dock-yard; but by placing a British sloop so that its guns enfiladed the quay, he was enabled to overawe them: the assistance of the Spaniards had been offered, and accepted, to scuttle and sink two large ships which were used as powder magazines, and to destroy a part of the disabled fleet. At eight in the evening, a fireship was towed into the harbor; and in a few hours afterwards the flames began to ascend: as the conflagration acquired strength, it assumed the appearance of an immense volcano, amidst which were distinctly seen masts and yards of burning vessels, throwing light on advancing bodies of republican troops, and illuminating the distant mountains with a red and fearful glance. The jacobins now began to rise *en masse* against the flying royalists: horrid cries and yells of vengeance were mingled with the screams and supplications of the remaining fugitives; until a shock like that of an earthquake, which was quickly succeeded by a similar explosion, caused for some time an awful and universal silence. This addition to the terrors of the scene was occasioned by the lukewarmness or timidity of the Spaniards, who set fire to the magazines, instead of scuttling them: neither were they successful in destroying the other ships committed to their charge, which fell into the hands of the French very little damaged.<sup>12</sup> In spite of the burning embers falling in all directions, the republican soldiers rushed towards the harbor, and beheld the conflagration with an indignation that soon vented itself on the surviving royalists: their screams, mingled with the roar of cannon pointed against the retiring troops, announced that all hope was gone: for twenty-four hours the wretched inhabitants became a prey to the brutality of the troops, and, still worse, to that of the galley-slaves, who were let loose against their devoted city: a stop was put to these horrors only by a ransom of 4,000,000 francs raised among the citizens, of whom, nevertheless, an immense number perished in a few weeks: 200 were for a considerable

<sup>12</sup> Three ships of the line only and three frigates were brought away by the British; though the total number taken or destroyed, was eighteen of the line, nine frigates, and eleven corvettes: seven ships of the line, and eleven frigates were saved to the republicans by the bad conduct of the Spaniards. They had also sent five ships of the line to Rochefort at the beginning of the siege.



time beheaded daily ; the inhuman *mitrillades* of Lyons were repeated with terrible effect ; and 12,000 laborers were hired from the surrounding districts to demolish the public edifices. So terminated this memorable campaign, in which the star of Napoleon rose, as it set, amidst scenes of carnage and horror indescribable. The frank old veteran, Dugommier, strongly recommended this artillery officer to the notice of the convention ; pointingly adding, ‘ that if neglected, he would assuredly force his own way up.’ He was, accordingly, placed on the list for promotion, and confirmed in a provisional appointment of *chef de bataillon* in the army of Italy ; but before he joined that army, he exhibited great talent and assiduity, in surveying and fortifying the French coast on the Mediterranean.

The capture of Toulon crushed every hope of resistance to the jacobins in the south of France ; while the dangers arising from an ill-concerted and ill-directed confederacy had been ward off in all other quarters, by the energy of the committee of public safety, the military genius of Carnot, and the influx of talent, courage, and numbers from all classes and all districts into the ranks of the army. In the beginning of the contest, the allies had the advantage both in numbers and discipline ; yet their discipline was no match for that spirit which the revolution had infused into their antagonists ; while their adherence to the old system of warfare, and the policy of merely keeping up their contingents, soon exposed them to dispersion or annihilation from the accumulating stream, which the overthrow of all pacific employments poured into the French armies, and which enabled them to realise the new method of concentrating their forces, and bearing down with destructive effect on the weakened line of their opponents. Thus was revolutionised France left free to act and to conquer ; in which course she was assisted no less by the internal state of her own country, than by that of Europe in general. If the committee of public safety consolidated the discordant materials of the revolution, and converted the reign of terror into a school of conquest ; the different sovereigns of the continent had no moral influence which they could oppose to the republican energy of their irritated foe. The *curse of Poland* lay heavy on the principal crowned heads of Europe ; separate and selfish interests disconcerted their coalitions ; no healthy system of finance, like that of England, had been established in a single state ; and the people in general groaned under feudal



burdens, military tyranny, and political abuses of every description: the invaders held out to them deliverance from oppression, and renovation from a state of torpidity and decay: the spark was thrown into a combustible mass of discontent, and the explosion soon cast continental Europe into the arms of France.



## CHAP. XXXVII.

## GEORGE III. (CONTINUED.)—1794.

State of the navies of France and England—Meeting of the British parliament—State of political parties—Lord Mornington's speech in favor of Mr. Pitt's views—Answered by Sheridan—Vote for the continuance of war—Supplies, &c.—Case of Messrs. Muir and Palmer—Also of the secretary and two delegates of the Scotch convention—Motions by Mr. Adam to revise the Scotch criminal law—English agitators—London corresponding society, and constitutional society—Great increase of the union, &c.—Interference of government—Hardy, Horne Tooke, and others arrested and sent to the Tower on a charge of high treason—Suspension of the habeas corpus act—Introduction of foreign troops into England—Augmentation of militia and fencible forces—Voluntary subscriptions solicited—Motion on the subject in parliament—Bills for volunteer corps and enlistment of French emigrants—Bill for cutting down sinecures and pensions, &c. rejected—Motion on the subject of La Fayette—Subsidy to the king of Prussia—Subsidy to Sardinia—Mr. Canning—Slave trade—Report on the trial of Mr. Hastings—Ministerial appointments—Corsica annexed to the British crown—Lord Macartney's embassy to China—Trials at Lancaster and Edinburgh—Prisoners in the Tower indicted—Reports of conspiracies—Trial of Hardy—Of Horne Tooke—Effects of their acquittal—British conquests in the West Indies—Conquest of Corsica—Military operations on the continent—Meeting of the British parliament—Debates on the address.

WHILE such changes were prepared in France for continental Europe, a very different fate awaited the naval armaments of that country : for the circumstances which augmented her military resources, destroyed those of her navy ; since fleets require nautical habits, commercial wealth, and nurseries for seamen : the consequence was, that from the very first, the naval superiority of Great Britain became apparent.

France at the beginning of the contest possessed seventy-five ships of the line and seventy frigates ; but most of the officers, being royalists, had resigned or emigrated ; and their successors were of an inferior grade, deficient both in experience and in



nautical skill. England had 129 ships of the line, and more than 100 frigates: she was also enabled to put ninety of each class immediately into commission, by drawing hardy tars from the almost inexhaustible stores of her merchant service and fisheries. Unable, however, as the French were to face our naval squadrons, they greatly annoyed our trade, by the innumerable privateers, which the large capital, thrown out of commerce, encouraged them to prepare.

The British parliament assembled on the twenty-first of January; and the diversities of political opinion continued to exhibit themselves in three principal parties, though a little varied by the course of events: a few, with Mr. Burke at their head, deemed war against regicides indispensably necessary, until monarchy should be restored: a larger number reckoned war unwise from the beginning, and saw that its continuance would drive France to more desperate exertions and more important conquests. To repel her armies, they said, similar armies were to be found; to resist her force, similar force was to be produced: if war must be prosecuted, French means were to be used in order to render it successful: before we could act on equal terms, our constitution must be in substance destroyed; private property be thrown into a public stock; all persons, as well as all fortunes, put into a state of requisition; and the British cabinet reduced to a committee of public safety:<sup>13</sup> besides, it was asked, for what purpose was the continuance of the war? The professed objects of it had been attained in the delivery of Holland, and the expulsion of the French from the Netherlands, unless we proposed to restore the Bourbon monarchy; which intention ministers did not profess: we were now fighting without an object. The more numerous body, led by Mr. Pitt, maintained that the object of the war was, and uniformly had been, the same; the security of Great Britain, and general tranquillity: the present dreadful system of France was totally incompatible with these objects: in its nature it could not last; the people, if properly supported, would revolt against a government so tyrannical, so rapacious, so desolating. 'We are called,' said Mr. Pitt, in his speech on the twenty-first, 'to witness the political and moral phenomenon of a mighty and civilised people formed into a horde of artificial banditti, throwing off all the restraints

<sup>13</sup> See 'Lord Lauderdale's Letters to the Peers of Scotland,' p. 257.



which have influenced men in social life; displaying a savage valor directed by a sanguinary spirit; forming rapine and destruction into a system; and perverting to their detestable purposes all the talents and ingenuity which they derived from their advanced state of civilisation: with the rulers of this nation we cannot make peace: all the succeeding parties, which have prevailed from the deposition of the king, however adverse to each other, have agreed in hostility to this country.'

Mr. Pitt was ably supported by lord Mornington, who represented the French views of aggrandisement as unlimited, and springing from principles subversive of all regular government: he quoted their writings, to show their inveterate hostility against this country; though a surer proof existed in their conduct, uniformly hostile to this and every other nation within their reach. With regard to the probability of success, his lordship thought that the efforts of the French arose from causes which could not last long; since the dreadful fire lighted up among them must be consuming fast the fuel by which it was nourished: their expenditure was enormous; their finances must speedily be exhausted; and then they would be obliged to succumb to the just and systematic exertions of the allies: but it was only by our warlike efforts that we could secure ourselves from the inroads of revolutionary France: in proportion as her system of tyranny consumed the national property, she must endeavor to repair her finances by foreign plunder: it must be her interest to propagate the doctrines by which she subsists at home, and to subvert every constitution which forms a disadvantageous contrast to her own absurdities. The speech of his lordship was answered at great length and with great spirit by Mr. Sheridan; and, as it was evident that the whig seceders would soon yield to the persuasion of Mr. Burke, and accept office under the present administration, his speech overflowed with indignation at these instances of desertion, when the coincidence of worldly advantage with a change of sentiment would render it difficult to decide on the sincerity or disinterestedness of the converts. Lord Mornington, having contrasted the privations and sacrifices demanded of the French by their minister of finance, with those required of the English nation, Mr. Sheridan, in reply, observed,—'The noble lord need not remind us that there is no great danger of our chancellor of the exchequer making any such experiment. I can more easily fancy another sort of speech from our prudent minister: I can more easily conceive him modestly comparing himself with his rival, and saying,—Do I demand of



you, wealthy citizens, to lend your hoards to government without interest? on the contrary, when I shall come to propose a loan, there is not a man of you, to whom I shall not hold out at least a job in every part of the subscription, and a usurious profit on every pound you devote to the necessities of your country.—Do I demand of you, my fellow-placemen and brother-pensioners, that you should sacrifice any part of your stipends to the public exigency? on the contrary, am I not daily increasing your emoluments and your numbers, in proportion as the country becomes unable to provide for you?—Do I require of you, my latest and most zealous proselytes, of you who have come over to me for the special purpose of supporting the war; a war, on the success of which you solemnly protest, that the salvation of Britain, and of civil society itself, depends;—do I require of you, that you should make a temporary sacrifice, in the cause of human nature, of the greater part of your private incomes? No, gentlemen, I scorn to take advantage of the eagerness of your zeal; and, to prove that I think the sincerity of your attachment to me needs no such test, I will make your interest co-operate with your principles: I will quarter many of you on the public supply, instead of calling on you to contribute to it; and while their whole thoughts are absorbed in patriotic apprehensions for their country, I will dexterously force on others the favorite objects of the vanity or ambition of their lives.’ After proceeding at considerable length in a similar strain, he asks,—‘What is the language spoken by the actions of those who seem to have no direct object of office or profit? The throne is in danger! we will support the throne; but let us share in the smiles of royalty: the order of nobility is in danger! I will fight for nobility, says the viscount; but my zeal would be much greater if I were made an earl. Rouse all the marquis within me, exclaims the earl; and the peerage never turned forth a more undaunted champion in its cause than I shall prove. Stain my green ribbon blue, cries out an illustrious knight, and the fountain of honor will have a fast and faithful servant. What are the people to think of our sincerity? what credit are they to give to our professions? is this system to be persevered in? is there nothing that whispers to the right honorable gentleman, that the crisis is too big, that the times are too gigantic, to be ruled by the little hackneyed and every-day means of ordinary corruption?’

A great majority in parliament, convinced that peace could not be preserved with the present rulers of France, and feeling



confident, from their ignorance of republican enthusiasm and its creative effects, that the resources of that country must soon be exhausted, voted for the continuance of the war, and for its vigorous prosecution. Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, lord Lansdowne, lord Lauderdale, and others persevered in maintaining its inexpediency, and the improbability of our success: they denied that France had been hostile towards us; they foretold her career of conquests, and prophesied disappointment to this nation, similar to that which it had experienced at the end of the American contest: they repeated their arguments, both on direct motions for peace,<sup>14</sup> and on various other questions connected with the war; but they produced no effect on the parliamentary majorities. A supply of 85,000 seamen, including 12,115 marines, was voted, on the motion of lord Arden, for the service of the present year, as well as 60,244 land forces. The total under arms in the British dominions, including fencibles and militia, amounted to 140,000 men, beside 40,000 foreign soldiers in our pay. To meet these extraordinary exertions, a loan of £11,000,000 was voted by parliament: so early in the contest was adopted the dangerous system of laying on posterity the burdens of the present time.

Next to peace and war, questions relating to internal discontent, projects of innovation, and prosecutions of their abettors, occupied a large share of parliamentary attention. In Scotland, two active agitators of political change, Messrs. Muir and Palmer,<sup>15</sup> had been last year tried as seditious persons, for distributing Paine's Rights of Man, and other works of evil tendency; as well as for composing and promoting addresses, or making harangues against the constituted authorities of the realm, and exhorting the people to resist what they called oppression. No objection having been made to the evidence, the jury brought in a verdict of guilty in each case; and as in Scotland, the sentence, in cases of sedition, rested with the judges, the punishment which they thought proper to inflict was transportation for the term of fourteen years. As both these gentlemen possessed good moral characters, and were thought to have been led away by enthusiasm rather than malignity, this punishment excited a considerable degree of compassion for their fate: indeed, by some eminent members

<sup>14</sup> As on February 17, by the marquis of Lansdowne, and on May 30, by the duke of Bedford, in the upper, and Mr. Fox in the lower house.

<sup>15</sup> The former an advocate, the latter a dissenting preacher.



of the law in Scotland it was thought that there had been an assumption of power not allowed by the statute, regarding that species of sedition for which they were indicted :<sup>16</sup> others, not competent to enter on the question of law, censured the judges for adopting the extreme punishment which, on their own hypothesis, they could adopt : many, however, conceived that the castigation was fully merited, and would be useful as an example.

Toward the end of October, an association of persons entertaining extravagant notions of reform, similar to those of Messrs. Muir and Palmer, met at Edinburgh, and styled themselves the Scotch convention of delegates, for obtaining annual parliaments and universal suffrage : besides, they foolishly adopted many of the forms and names of the French convention ; accosting each other by the term *citizen*, dividing themselves into sections, appointing committees of organisation, of instruction, of finance, &c., and dating their proceedings from the first year of the British convention, one and indivisible. Having associated for the ostensible purpose of parliamentary reform, they soon began to aim at an equality of political privileges, which they claimed as an inherent right : they also concerted measures for assembling delegates from other innovating clubs, especially the London corresponding society, whenever it should be necessary to act, in consequence of any measures of precaution or coercion which the government might adopt ; and they were fully prepared to carry their doctrines of resistance into effect. Emboldened by increased numbers, they began openly to avow their designs, when ministers thought it time to interrupt them ; and on the fifth and sixth of December, the Edinburgh magistrates seized their papers, and took into custody several of the leading members : three were brought to trial before the high court of justiciary ; namely, William Skirving the secretary, and two London delegates, Maurice Margarot and Joseph Gerald ; all of whom were found guilty, and sentenced to transportation for fourteen years : but this judgment incurred the same censure as that which had been given against Muir and Palmer : the conduct of the judges was blamed, not only by democrats, but by the

<sup>16</sup> They were tried on an accusation of leasing-making, or stirring up sedition, by spreading false reports between the king and his subjects. It was contended that the punishment annexed to this crime by the law of Scotland was outlawry, not transportation ; that the judges might exile them from Scotland ; but that was all.



constitutional opponents of government. The convicted persons were now on board transports at Woolwich, among other offenders destined for Botany-bay ; and not a few, even of the party well-affected towards ministers, though they admitted that the judgment was just, still deprecated the severity of their treatment. A stronger ground, however, was taken up in parliament ; where it was maintained that the sentence was not legal, and that the criminal jurisprudence of Scotland required a revision, which should render it more definite and precise, and should put it on the same footing with the penal law of England. Motions to this intent were brought forward by Mr. Adam, a barrister of considerable eminence, well acquainted both with the English and Scottish law.

His first proposition, introduced to the house on the fourth of February, was to establish an appeal from the high court of justiciary to the lords ; with a clause inserted, subjecting the sentences of 1793 to the projected revisal. The motion was opposed, on the ground of its being a change in the law as it existed before and since the union, and an innovation uncalled for by a majority of the inhabitants of Scotland, who were satisfied of the excellence of the law as it now stood : it was impolitic therefore and hazardous to change such a system for one that was untried and of doubtful operation, not sought for by the people for whose benefit it was intended. After a great display of legal and political ability by the mover, his supporters, and his opponents,<sup>17</sup> the motion was negatived by 126 votes against 31.

Defeated in the question of appeal, Mr. Adam next moved for a copy of the record in the trials of Muir and Palmer ; and, on the tenth of March, he proposed a revision of their sentence ; undertaking to prove that by the law of Scotland the crime imputed to them of leasing-making, was only subject to fine, imprisonment, or banishment, not to transportation ; also that the acts attributed to those gentlemen did not amount even to that crime. He supported his legal positions with very extensive knowledge, judicial and historical ; endeavoring to establish them by statute, analogy, and precedent, as well as by civil and political reasons ; showing that the acts, cases, and decisions which he brought forward, were not detached and isolated, but all resulted from the same spirit and principles established in the best times and by the best authority : he also contended that transportation beyond the seas could not be a part

<sup>17</sup> Parliamentary Debates, February 4, 1794.



of the Scottish law before the union, for Scotland had no possessions so situated; neither since the union had any act been passed, allowing Scotch courts to transport in cases of sedition: lastly, he forcibly and eloquently stated the evils, moral and political, which must arise from such a perversion of law.

The lord advocate, who had acted officially as public accuser of the persons in question, now vindicated the judgments passed on them, as legal and meritorious: he endeavored to prove, that though banishment and transportation, by the English law, might not be the same thing, yet they were regarded as synonymous by the law of Scotland, and so accepted by lawyers and criminal courts. After an exposition of the law, he vindicated its recent exercise against persons who had been extremely active in sedition, and deserved exemplary punishment. Messrs. Sheridan and Fox on the one hand, and Mr. Pitt on the other, exerted themselves in respectively supporting Mr. Adam and the lord advocate; and after another eminent display of legal and political strategy, the motion was negatived by a large majority. Notwithstanding these repeated disappointments, Mr. Adam still proceeded, with a manly spirit, in the course which he considered right: on the twenty-fifth he introduced a third motion for regulating the justiciary courts of Scotland, or assimilating them to the English criminal courts, in substance, sanctions, rules, and forms of administration. Keeping his proposition distinct from the special questions which had lately been raised on this subject, he endeavored to show the general incompetence of the Scotch criminal system to answer the purposes of substantial justice: Mr. secretary Dundas, however, denied the necessity or policy of change in a system which was agreeable to the people at large; and having instituted a comparison between the Scottish and English penal law, he endeavored to show that in many cases the former was the best. Respecting sedition, when he saw the virulent and systematic attacks daily made on our constitution, he must avow his conviction, that the punishment annexed to this crime by the English law was not sufficiently severe; and that the legislature must adopt a different mode of procedure on that subject. After the lord advocate had spoken, the attorney-general<sup>18</sup> defended the criminal justice of Scotland, as adapted to the general purposes of a penal code, as well as the character and habits of the people; also as firmly settled

<sup>18</sup> Sir John Scott.



by the articles of the union : but he delivered no opinion on the competency of the English law to restrain sedition. The incidental observation of Mr. Dundas on this point did not escape the notice of Mr. Fox, who appeared to consider it, not merely as an illustrative remark, but as an indirect intimation of a premeditated change, intended to sound the opinions and feelings of the house ; and he cautioned him against presuming to interfere with the liberties of Englishmen. This motion of Mr. Adam experienced a similar fate with the two former ; and the house refused to receive a petition from Messrs. Muir and Palmer, requesting a revisal of their sentence. Lord Lauderdale brought the subject before the lords, but his motion was negatived without a division ; and the lord chancellor proposed a resolution, ‘ that there was no ground for interfering in the established courts of criminal justice, as administered under the constitution ; and by which the rights, liberties, and properties of all ranks of subjects were protected.’

The punishment of these agitators in Scotland did not put a stop to schemes of dangerous innovation in England, where at this period a set of persons made themselves conspicuous, who wanted nothing but opportunity to follow the example of the French republicans : our jacobins, however, were promptly met with fortitude and wisdom ; faction being coerced by the vigor of Pitt, and England allowed time to recover her senses, and be saved. The London corresponding society at this time counted more than 30,000 members in its association, and fully justified its title, by entering into correspondence with every seditious club in the empire : the constitutional society was, according to a jacobin expression, soon affiliated with it ; and their respective secretaries, Mr. Thomas Hardy, a shoemaker, and Mr. Daniel Adams, an under clerk, made known to the world the results of their respective deliberations, signed and sanctioned by their names and authority : associations in the mean time rapidly multiplied ; but citizen Hardy’s club exercised a species of metropolitan jurisdiction over all. Handbills and pamphlets, summoning the people to meet for the attainment of radical reform, were largely circulated ; preparatory meetings were held ; and to assist their schemes, a notorious declaimer, named John Thelwall, carried on a series of political lectures, for the purpose of commenting on Paine’s works, and throwing out scurrilous invectives against all constitutional establishments : by such means the union arrived at a complete revolutionary organisation, with a central board in London, a division into provinces and districts, and a list of members in correspondence or direct connexion, approaching to



half a million. It was now high time for government to interfere : ministers, having remarked the open proceedings of these societies and individuals, and suspected the machinations of their ringleaders, adopted a policy which is oftentimes necessary in apprehended plots ;—that of employing spies to become members of an association, in order to betray the secrets with which they may be entrusted. In consequence of discoveries obtained through these and other channels, they ordered Hardy and Adams to be arrested, and all their papers seized : immediately, Martin, an attorney, Loveit, a hair-dresser, Thelwall, and three or four others were apprehended. In the course of a few days, the arrests extended to persons of a higher class ; Mr. Joyce, a dissenting minister, and tutor in lord Stanhope's family, Mr. Kydd, a barrister of rising talents, and the celebrated Horne Tooke, being among the number of persons confined : this latter gentleman owed his arrest to the following characteristic note, transmitted to him from Joyce, which fell into the hands of ministers :—‘ Dear citizen, this morning, at six o'clock, citizen Hardy was taken away, by an order from the secretary of state's office : they seized every thing on which they could lay their hands. Query—*is it possible to get ready by Thursday?* Yours, J. Joyce.’

Their papers, on examination, proved that the two societies had concerted a project for assembling, by their joint influence, a national convention ; which, taken in conjunction with other proceedings, was construed by ministers to be a conspiracy against the constitution ; and this they inferred was a conspiracy against the king, and consequently an act of high treason. Such was the opinion of the lord chancellor Loughborough and others ; though no less eminent lawyers, with lord Thurlow at their head, declared that the crimes, of which the arrested members were accused, would not, if proved, amount to high treason : government, however, adopted the chancellor's opinion, and sent them to the Tower, there to be confined till evidence should be prepared for their trials. On the twelfth of March, secret committees, at the instance of ministers, were nominated ; and on the sixteenth the first report was read, when Mr. Pitt stated at great length his view of its contents, as well as the history and proceedings of the societies : finally, he proposed a bill ‘ empowering his majesty to secure and detain all persons suspected of designs against his crown and government.’ Mr. Fox objected in the strongest manner to this suspension of the habeas corpus act, as destructive to the best principles of English liberty. ‘ Were the government,’ he exclaimed, ‘ about to erect tribunals to punish an indignant public, from rage at the



hatred excited by ministerial tyranny? Was terror, as in France, to be made the order of the day, and not a voice allowed to plead against it? Was it resolved to demolish the British constitution, one part after another, under pretence of preventing its destruction by French principles? What object had the societies, but to obtain universal suffrage? The word convention was held up as a subject of alarm; yet what was a convention but an assembly? If the people did any thing illegal, there was the common law to imprison and punish them. Had France been protected by a habeas corpus act; had its government been constrained by standing laws to respect the rights of the community; improper notions would never have found an entrance into that unhappy country. By parity of reason, they were only to be dreaded here, if the safeguards of the constitution were removed. If the liberty of meeting to complain of grievances were to be taken away, what would become of our boasted constitution? and if it were to be withdrawn till the discontented were rooted out, or the thirst for power assuaged in government, it would never be restored, and British liberty would finally be destroyed.' Mr. Grey spoke in terms of bitter reproach and scorn of what he considered the minister's daring attempt on the liberties of the people, more especially as he had himself set the example of all that he now professed to condemn. In arraigning this apparent inconsistency, he asked, 'what was the conduct of the premier in 1782, when his pretended sincerity for a parliamentary reform had been defeated, in that house, by a motion for the order of the day? he had abandoned it for ever. William Pitt, the reformer of that day, was William Pitt the prosecutor; ay, and the prosecutor, too, of reformers now. He, who thought fit to inflame the passions of the people, and inspire them with a contempt for the house of commons then, would not at present allow the people to judge of their own rights and interests; but persecuted, with the real bitterness of an apostate, his partners in the question of parliamentary reform. He had been that day examining, as a prisoner, John Horne Tooke, for persevering in his sentiments.'

On the other hand, it was asked by Mr. Pitt, 'Whether the dangers now threatening the state were not greater than any which could arise from the proposed suspension, which was to last only six months, and would not affect the rights of any class of society? We were driven to the necessity of imitating, in some degree, French violence, to resist the contagion of French principles. Was lenity to be admitted, when the con-



stitution was at stake? If a convention on jacobinical principles were once established, who could foresee where it would end? not to stop the progress of these principles, were no better than granting a license to sedition and anarchy. It were in vain to deny the existence of designs against the government and constitution; and what mode of combating them could be so reasonable as that proposed; which does not oppose the right of the people to meet and petition for the reform or redress of abuses, but only aims at preventing the establishment of a power in the state superior to that of parliament itself? The papers inspected by the committee clearly show that this is their object, and that they are leagued with all the societies which have brought desolation on France. They have chosen a central spot to collect demagogues from all quarters; while arms have been procured and liberally distributed: unless, therefore, these proceedings are speedily checked, government must come to an end.' Mr. Sheridan deprecated, like Fox, the grant of an arbitrary power of imprisonment as unconstitutional and dangerous; but Mr. Burke felt convinced that it would not be abused, and Mr. Windham advised that the strongest measures of coercion should be adopted. The house of commons, concurring with the minister, passed the bill by a majority of two hundred and sixty-one to forty-two; and it was adopted by the lords without a division.

With a view to co-operate with the royalists in Brittany and the neighboring districts, a body of Hessians was placed in temporary quarters at Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight; the circumstance being communicated to parliament, in a message from his majesty, on the twenty-seventh of March. Opposition contended that by this proceeding the minister had violated the bill of rights and act of settlement; but a motion to that intent, made by Mr. Grey, was negatived: the subject was afterwards revived in both houses, by propositions for a bill of indemnity, but with no better success; ministers contending that it would be absurd to seek indemnity for measures which were justifiable and not unconstitutional.

On the twenty-second of February, in consequence of a message from his majesty, relating to the avowed purpose of an invasion of this country by the enemy, a large augmentation of the militia, with an addition to the volunteer fencible corps, was voted; and the expedient of soliciting voluntary subscriptions, by a formal letter from the secretary of state to the lord-lieutenants of counties, was successfully resorted to, though strenuously opposed as illegal, and contrary to the



spirit of the British constitution. On the twenty-eighth of March, Mr. Sheridan moved, that it was dangerous and unconstitutional for the people of this country to make any loan, &c. to the crown, to be used for any public purpose, without the previous consent of parliament; and though the contrary could not be satisfactorily maintained, yet the motion was negatived by a considerable majority, as was a similar one made by lord Lauderdale in the house of peers. An animated discussion also arose on a bill introduced by the minister for the encouragement of those who should voluntarily enrol themselves for the general defence of the country during the war; as also on another, for employing French emigrants in a military capacity. All these bills were strenuously supported by Mr. Burke, as giving evidence to the enemy of the patriotic spirit of the country, while in themselves they were not unconstitutional; but he opposed, in the case of a bill brought in at this time by Mr. Harrison, a violent amputation of the emoluments of pensions and sinecures, particularly of the efficient offices of administration; observing, 'that the amount of savings would be contemptible in itself, while the principle was absolutely dangerous, as it went to a direct invasion of the rights and properties of individuals; for the emoluments of places held under the crown were possessions as sacred as any landed property in the country.'

A motion, on the seventeenth of March, by general Fitzpatrick, for an address, beseeching his majesty to intercede with the king of Prussia for the release of La Fayette, then confined in one of his prisons,<sup>19</sup> drew from Mr. Burke the most envenomed animadversions on one whom he considered a false pretender to patriotism, whose mischievous conduct had drawn down the greatest evils on his country. Instead of being termed, he said, an 'illustrious exile,' he was then, and ought always to be considered, the outcast of the world; who, having no talents to guide or influence the storm which he had so diligently labored to raise, fled like a dastard from the bloodshed and massacre in which he had involved so many thousands of unoffending persons and families. Mr. Pitt denied that La Fayette's conduct had ever been friendly to the genuine cause of liberty; and affirmed, that by such interference as was requested, we should be setting up ourselves as guardians of

<sup>19</sup> It appeared, that the king of Prussia, being applied to for the release of La Fayette, had answered, that he was not his prisoner alone, but that of the confederate powers jointly.



the consciences of foreign potentates : the motion was accordingly negatived by a large majority.

Various subsidies were voted to foreign princes, and justified on the ground of contributing to the great purposes of the war : the most important was that to the king of Prussia, which was announced, as well as a convention with the States-General, by Mr. secretary Dundas, on the twenty-eighth of April. Mr. Pitt stated that Frederic William was to furnish 62,400 troops ; for which his Britannic majesty had agreed to pay him £50,000 per month, £100,000 per month for forage, £400,000 to put the army in motion, and £100,000 on its return ; to the aggregate of which sums the States-General were to contribute £400,000 : over the troops thus subsidised the direction and command were still vested in the king of Prussia. Though he was a principal in the war, Mr. Pitt observed, he was unable to carry it on without pecuniary assistance ; and his force was to be employed for our advantage, and the conquests to be made in the name of the maritime states. The astonishing exertions of France rendered extraordinary efforts on our part necessary ; and the object of the war being so important, it would be preposterous folly to slacken our exertions in order to spare expense.

Opposition reprobated this policy as the height of profusion ; contending, first, that from the efforts of Frederic William no benefits could accrue to this country, which would compensate for the cost ; and, secondly, we had no security, that when the money was contributed, he would perform his engagements. The king of Prussia, it was said, began this war, and had involved us in the contest ; and we were now bribing him to carry it on, whose conduct was a mixture of fraud, perfidy, and meanness, unparalleled in history : but if this monarch was to be considered merely as a hirer of troops, why were the soldiers paid by us to be under his command ? the direction of mercenaries should belong to those who hired their services. These arguments, however, had no effect : Mr. Pitt's motion to raise a loan of £2,500,000 on exchequer bills, in addition to the supplies of the current year, for the purpose of making good this engagement, after being warmly opposed in every stage, ultimately passed by a great majority.

Next to this subsidiary treaty with Prussia, a convention with the king of Sardinia, by which we engaged to continue the war till Savoy should be restored, incurred the strongest and most explicit censure. Great Britain had stipulated a subsidy of £200,000 a year, to assist this sovereign in his efforts to de-



fend his own dominions : but it was maintained by Mr. Whitbread and others, that the benefits we could derive from such exertions were by no means adequate to the expense ; also that the integrity of the king of Sardinia's dominions was not in the least degree necessary to the security of Great Britain, for which, according to ministers, we had engaged in the contest. Mr. Whitbread declared that no reliance was to be placed on any of these royal dealers in human flesh ; and it was his opinion, that if the views of their detestable combination had succeeded in the first campaign against the French, the liberties of Europe would have been destroyed ; nay, we ourselves should by this time have had a quarrel with them ; since, from their principles of despotism, they would, after they had imposed a tyranny on the French, have been disposed to make an attack on our free constitution. After a long inculpatory speech, he moved for an address to his majesty, lamenting that he should have been advised to make common cause with these powers, and requesting him to extricate himself from them ; since they prevented his concluding a separate peace.

Mr. Jenkinson, on this occasion, entered into a defence of the allied powers respecting the treaty of Pilnitz, which, according to him, had no views of ambition whatever ; its only object being to set free the unfortunate king of France : but when that sovereign notified his acceptance of the constitution of 1789, the courts of Vienna and Berlin showed every disposition to retreat from the stipulations at Pilnitz. Ministers endeavored to prove that the whole system of treaties, subsidiary as well as others, were means necessary to carry on the war ; and Mr. Pitt observed, that it was fortunate for us that we found other states, whose interests led them to make common cause with us against enemies of the rights of all mankind. The address was negatived by the usual majority ; as was a similar motion in the house of lords.

The preceding debate was remarkable for introducing Mr. Canning to the notice of the house as a youthful orator of great promise : at this time, party leaders were in the habit of watching our public schools and colleges for young men who displayed marks of decided genius, in order to enlist them under their banners : no one of the day had more distinguished himself, both at Eton and Oxford, than Canning ; while his education in the doctrines of the old whig school, and his relationship to Sheridan, by whom he was introduced to all the great luminaries of that party, tended to point him out as an accession of strength to the opposition : so confident indeed were



the whigs of his support, that when his college friend, Mr. Jenkinson,<sup>1</sup> delivered his first speech on the ministerial side of the house, and was hailed by his friends as the future champion of their principles, Mr. Sheridan made a personal allusion to Mr. Canning, the companion and friend of him who had just received their applause; assuring them, that in the cause of free and liberal opinions, he would far eclipse the fame which Mr. Jenkinson had so deservedly acquired. Mr. Canning, however, whose ambition of political power was probably never exceeded, soon saw the difficulty of rising under the shade of a proscribed party: he accordingly entered into terms with Mr. Pitt; and his first appearance in parliament was on the ministerial benches.<sup>2</sup> His speech on the present occasion brought him rather inauspiciously into contact with Mr. Fox; and moderate men of all parties felt any thing but gratification, when they saw the premier expose his great rival to the flippant attack of an arrogant young man. Mr. Canning took part in several other debates during this session; distinguishing himself more by that propensity to satire and sarcasm, which rendered him so annoying to his opponents, than by any enlarged capacity of comprehending the general bearings on a question: his speeches are those of an active partisan, determined to annoy those whom

<sup>1</sup> The late lord Liverpool.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Moore, in his *Life of Sheridan*, makes the following remarks on this defection of Canning from his early friends:—  
‘However dangerous it might be to exalt such an example into a precedent; it is questionable whether, in thus resolving to join the ascendant side, Mr. Canning has not conferred a greater benefit on the country than he would ever have been able to effect in the ranks of his original friends. That party, which has now been so long the sole depositary of the power of the state, has, in addition to the original narrowness of its principles, contracted all that proud obstinacy in antiquated error, which is the invariable characteristic of such monopolies; and which, however consonant with its vocation, as the chosen instrument of the crown, should have long since invalidated it in the service of a free and enlightened people. Some infusion of the spirit of the times into this body had become necessary even for its preservation; in the same manner as the inhalement of youthful breath has been recommended by some physicians to the infirm and superannuated. This renovating inspiration the genius of Mr. Canning has supplied. His first political lessons were derived from sources too sacred to his young admiration, to be forgotten: he has carried the spirit of these lessons with him into the councils which he joined; and by the vigor of the graft, which already shows itself in the fruits, bids fair to change altogether the nature of toryism.’ vol. ii. p. 244.



he cares not to conciliate, and recommend himself to the party whose cause he had espoused. Mr. Pitt saw in him a useful and ready instrument; selected him from among many competitors; and continued to regard him with a distinguished preference to the day of his death.

As all endeavors had failed to procure a termination of the war, or a dissolution of alliances deemed by government conducive to its purposes, opposition now proceeded to inquire how far the objects proposed had been obtained, and what was the probability of ultimate success. Major Maitland, in a speech of considerable detail, argument, and eloquence, reviewed the measures and events of last campaign, and contended that the acquisitions made by the French greatly exceeded their losses. They had been forced to evacuate Belgium, but they had suppressed the revolt in La Vendée; while the strength of the allies had been declining ever since the siege of Valenciennes: the empress of Russia made protestations, but took no active share in hostilities; and the king of Prussia was evidently meditating a secession: the military plans of the allies deserved great censure; for while their armies were united, their efforts had been successful: but the separation of the forces he imputed to the British cabinet, since it alone was to be benefited by the capture of Dunkirk. If the attempt on that fortress by a detached force was expedient, the sole hope of success lay in promptitude of execution, and completeness of preparations; but neither of these were attended to: four weeks elapsed from the taking of Valenciennes before the siege of Dunkirk commenced, and then neither artillery nor gun-boats were ready to cover the operation.<sup>3</sup> He still more severely reprobated the evacuation of Toulon; asking why other troops were not sent to preserve the conquest; or why, when it was found untenable, an evacuation was not at once determined on, and the fleet brought away to save the wretched inhabitants from the fury of those whom they had mortally offended? On such grounds, he moved for a committee, 'to inquire into the causes which led to the failure of the army under the duke of York, and to the evacuation of Toulon.' It was replied, that Dunkirk would have been to Great Britain a very important acquisition; that the attempt to gain it appeared practicable, and was therefore wise; that its failure was attributable to the enormous efforts of the French,

<sup>3</sup> A great proportion of the cannon balls sent to this siege were found too large for the calibre of the guns.



which could not have been foreseen. The same cause occasioned the evacuation of Toulon; but they who censured us for leaving that place, ought to recollect that we had there given a blow to the French navy, from which it would not recover for ages. On a general view of the campaign, it was said that great glory was due to the British councils and arms; which being the opinion of a majority in the house, the motion was lost.

The question of the slave trade was this session agitated by Mr. Wilberforce, who introduced a bill to abolish that part of the traffic which supplied foreign territories with slaves: it passed the commons, but was rejected by the lords.

On the fifth of March, Mr. Burke moved for a committee to inspect the journals of the lords, relative to proceedings on the trial of Mr. Hastings, and to report the facts and observations on them to the house: this report, occupying nearly 200 pages, was accordingly made on the seventeenth of April; and is reputed by competent judges to be one of the most able and elaborate papers that have come from the pen of that great man. With a vast and recondite knowledge of legal forms, principles, and history, it embraces all the circumstances connected with that celebrated impeachment; turning on a question of great importance;—whether, in a case, for which neither the written nor unwritten law of a nation has provided, the courts may make a provision, by conforming existing laws and principles to it, or by subtracting it from their operation. Acutely sensible to the vexations which he had experienced, he felt strongly the abuses which crossed his path, and displayed them in the most energetic language; well knowing, that without exposing the abuses of the law, there can be but little hope of its amendment.

The report being published, without authority, in the form of a pamphlet, lord Thurlow seized that opportunity of venting his indignation in the house of lords against a publication, which he characterised as ‘disgraceful and indecent, tending to misrepresent and vilify the conduct of judges and magistrates entrusted with the administration of justice and the laws of the country.’ On the following day, Mr. Burke in his place adverted to this attack in a brief but pointed reply, in which, speaking of the report, he says, ‘it accuses the judges neither of ignorance nor corruption: whatever it says, it does not say it calumniously: that kind of language belongs to persons, whose eloquence entitles them to a free use of epithets. The report states, that the judges had given their opinions secretly,



contrary to the almost uninterrupted tenor of parliamentary usage: it states, that the opinions were given, not on the law, but on the case: it states, that the mode of giving opinions was unprecedented, and contrary to the privileges of the house of commons: it states, that the committee did not know on what rules and principles the judges had decided in those cases, as they neither heard them, nor are they entered on the journals. It is very true, that we were and are extremely dissatisfied with those opinions, and the consequent determination of the lords; and we do not think such a mode of proceeding at all justified by the most numerous and best precedents. The report speaks for itself: whenever an occasion shall be regularly given to maintain every thing of substance in that paper, I shall be ready to meet the proudest name for ability, learning, or rank, which this kingdom contains, on that subject.' No one seemed inclined to take up the gauntlet so thrown down; and on the twentieth of June Mr. Pitt moved the thanks of the house to the managers, 'for their faithful management in discharge of the trust reposed in them: ' the motion was carried; and Mr. Burke, in his reply, observed, that 'prejudices against himself, arising from personal friendship or obligations to the accused, were too laudable for him to be discomposed at them: he had thrown out no general reflections on the company's servants: he had merely repeated what Mr. Hastings himself had said of the troops serving in Oude; and the house had marked their opinion of the officers in the very terms he had used: as for other expressions attributed to him, they had been much exaggerated and misrepresented.' This was the last day of his appearance in the house of commons, having immediately afterwards accepted the Chiltern hundreds: at the conclusion of the session in July, the junction of the Portland party with the ministerial ranks took place in form, by the duke receiving a blue riband, with the office of third secretary of state; earl Fitzwilliam becoming at first president of the council, and soon afterwards lord lieutenant of Ireland; earl Spencer receiving the privy seal, which he soon laid down to preside over the admiralty; and Mr. Windham being made secretary at war: lord Loughborough had for some time held the great seal. The first determination of the duke of Portland and Mr. Windham, was not to accept office, believing that they could give more efficient support to government by free and uninfluenced votes in parliament; but they were dissuaded from this course by Mr. Burke, who assured them that the most splendid talents and the best intentions would be compara-



tively useless, without the possession of power to give them effect.

The loyal part of the nation was at this time gratified with the annexation of Corsica to the crown of Great Britain; and its political importance was a topic of ministerial exultation. The event of the famous Chinese embassy under lord Macartney did not afford equal matter of triumph: it had been fitted out without any intimation or reasonable ground of success; and his lordship, having been received with suspicion and jealousy, was ordered to depart as soon as the costly presents had been accepted, and a few trifling ones returned: the delay even of a few days was refused; and as one of the ambassador's suite expressed himself, 'they entered Pekin like paupers, remained in it like prisoners, and quitted it like vagrants.'

As an introduction to the trials of the state prisoners in the Tower, it will be necessary to mention some others which took place in different parts of the realm. At the spring assizes in Lancaster, Mr. Thomas Walker of Manchester, who had opposed certain measures of the minister, and exerted himself strenuously as an advocate for parliamentary reform, was indicted for conspiring with nine others to overturn the constitution by force of arms, and to assist the French in case of invasion. The principal evidence was a spy of the name of Dunn, who was afterwards convicted of wilful and corrupt perjury; and his testimony on this occasion was so contradictory, that the prisoner was honorably acquitted without being put on his defence. It appeared that a certain party in Manchester had encouraged the miscreant to institute prosecutions against such persons as were obnoxious to government; and through his testimony, Mr. Paul of that place was imprisoned nine weeks on a charge of treason, and Mr. Booth condemned to two years' imprisonment for speaking seditious words.

The next trials of importance were those of Robert Watt and David Downie at Edinburgh, in September; when the former was indicted for high treason. A conspiracy to levy war, by seizing on the castle, excise office, and bank of Edinburgh, as well as the principal magistrates, was clearly proved against him; but it was contended, that as there was no actual levying of war, the fact of conspiring only did not constitute an overt act of high treason under the statute of Edward III. The most curious circumstance, however, in the trial was the defence; which proved, by the testimony of the lord advocate, as well as by letters from Mr. Dundas, that the prisoner had carried on a confidential correspondence with the home secretary



himself as a government spy, and had received money for his services: the plea, however, had but little weight with the jury, who within five minutes brought in a verdict of guilty. Downie, against whom the principal charge was, that he had paid a bill for fifteen pikes made to the order of Watt, was also convicted; but being recommended to mercy, he afterwards received the royal pardon.

On the tenth of September, a special commission of oyer and terminer was issued for the prisoners charged with high treason in the Tower; and on the second of October it was opened at the Clerkenwell Sessions-house, by lord chief justice Eyre, in an elaborate charge to the grand jury, who found a bill of indictment against Hardy, Tooke, Bonney, Kydd, Joyce, Wardell, Holcroft, Richter, Moore, Thelwall, Hodson, and Baxter: Martin, the attorney, was indicted in a separate bill. While these proceedings were going on, a new and dreadful alarm was excited by the report of a conspiracy to assassinate the king, by one Le Maitre apprentice to a watchmaker, Higgins a chemist, and Smith who kept a book-stall: their accuser was named Upton, who had been expelled from the corresponding society for his infamous character, and had threatened vengeance against its members: he deposed to having been employed to make a brass tube, through which a dart, tinged with most subtile poison, was to be blown by Le Maitre against his majesty, on Windsor Terrace, or in the theatre. The prisoners were repeatedly examined before the privy council on the charge; but it came to nothing.

Another still more extensive alarm arose from a paper signed by Watt on the evening before his execution, as a last effort to escape the gallows; in which he declared that a most formidable conspiracy was prepared, and ready for instant execution; that the first movements were to be made in London, Edinburgh, and Dublin; while every other large town was ready to act in concert, on the very first notice, to be sent express by couriers. As he was unable to point out any of the conspirators, this document did not save him; and his fate excited no compassion among any party.

Under such circumstances, not very favorable to the prisoner, was Thomas Hardy brought to trial on the twenty-eighth of October, charged with maliciously and traitorously conspiring, together with John Horne Tooke, &c. to excite insurrection, rebellion, and war against our sovereign lord the king, to depose him from his regal state, and to bring or put him to death. The counsel who opened the prosecution having



stated nine overt acts of this species of high treason, Sir John Scott,<sup>3</sup> the attorney-general, in a speech of nine hours, went with no unwilling mind into a minute detail of the indictment; for which the papers that had been seized by a warrant from the secretary of state formed the chief grounds. The three following days were occupied by the production of evidence for the crown, oral and documentary; after which, Mr. Erskine addressed the jury, in behalf of the prisoner, for the space of six hours, in a style of impressive eloquence that can scarcely be paralleled. In the case of lord George Gordon, this consummate advocate had given the first grand blow to the doctrine of constructive treason; after which time, that perilous question lay at rest, till the season of alarm which arose out of the French revolution seemed a fit opportunity for reviving it; but even then it again found in Mr. Erskine so irresistible an antagonist, that it utterly failed, though brought forward with every chance in its favor, from the temper of the times, the power of the crown, the madness of the mob, and the talents of its professional and political supporters. The remainder of the day was occupied in the examination of witnesses for the prisoner, who gave him the character of a harmless, inoffensive man, whose object was parliamentary reform, not subversion of the constitution. When this evidence was finished, Mr. Gibbs addressed the jury in favor of the accused, and was followed by the solicitor-general in reply; after which lord chief justice Eyre summed up; and the jury, having retired for about two hours, brought in a verdict of not guilty. Perhaps no trial of an obscure individual ever interested the public more than this; and when notice of his acquittal was given, the air was rent with shouts of acclamation by the surrounding multitudes, who with inexpressible anxiety had awaited the issue: they then dragged him triumphantly in a coach to the house of his brother; where, after being requested, as they valued the cause in which they had shown their zeal, not to disturb the public peace, they quietly dispersed to their own homes.

Hardy was acquitted on the fifth of November; and on the seventeenth, John Horne Tooke was brought to the bar: after similar introductory forms to those which were used in the previous trial, and some altercations regarding the admission of evidence, the court was soon converted into such a scene of pleasantry, as rarely had been witnessed in the case of a capital

<sup>3</sup> Afterwards lord Eldon.



trial. It appeared, from evidence, on the production of the celebrated letter sent by Joyce to Horne Tooke, that the terrific query, with which it concluded, related merely to an extract which was to have been made from the red book, for the newspapers, of the places and emoluments derived from the public by Mr. Pitt and his family. Immediately on the intercepting of that document, a strong body of light horse was ordered to Wimbledon, and warrants were issued for the apprehension of Messrs Tooke and Joyce : on this and other parts of the charge the prisoner exercised his wit and raillery with such effect, that the whole bar, and the judges themselves, could not forbear joining in the laugh. The defence of his client, by Mr. Erskine, was a resistless torrent of eloquence and reasoning. In alluding to the trial of Hardy, and the powerful pressure against which he had to contend, he thus characterised the house of commons :—‘ Under all this, I could have looked up for protection in other circumstances : I could, as defending one of the people in a fearful extremity, have looked up to the people’s representatives ;—to that mighty tribunal, above all law, and the parent of all the protections which the law affords to the subject : I could have looked up to the commons of England, to hold a shield before the subject against the crown : but in this case, I found that shield of the subject a sharp and destroying sword in the hands of the enemy : the protecting house of commons was itself, by corruption and infatuation, the accuser, instead of the defender of the subject : it acted as an Old Bailey solicitor, to prepare briefs for the crown ; and that in a case which the judges declared to be so new, that they were obliged to try experiments on the legal constitution to find a way of trying it.’ In the course of his speech, Mr. Erskine, having occasion to make an allusion to the works of Paine, whose defence this independent and intrepid advocate had undertaken under very peculiar circumstances, related an anecdote, which shows in the strongest possible light the dreadful power of party feeling, when it could make even George III. stoop to so discreditable a proceeding. ‘ O, shame ! ’ said the pleader, ‘ you will say, when you hear what I am about to relate ; that there was a conspiracy formed to prevent the author from being defended : that was the genuine clew to Mr. Tooke’s conduct ; there was a conspiracy to prevent Mr. Paine from having even a trial ; he was a poor man, and could not defend himself : he was to have no counsel ; and I, who speak to you, was threatened with the loss of my office, if I undertook his defence as an advocate : I was told that Mr. Paine



must not be defended: I did defend him; and I lost my office.’<sup>4</sup> In conclusion, he thus beautifully stated a circumstance highly honorable to his client:—‘The part, gentlemen, which the prisoner has acted in this case entitles him to the greatest respect from me; because I was prepared to conduct it in a different manner, by a selection of those portions of the evidence, and by a minute attention to those particular entries, where I could have separated him from the rest. I could have made a defence which would have kept his vessel out of the storm; I could have brought him safe into the harbor of peace, while these men were left to ride out the tempest: but he would not suffer his defence to be conducted on that plan; and though he has nothing to do with the conspiracy, he holds out a rope to save others: he charges me to say—I will show that the other men had no such guilt belonging to them; and I rejoice in being the advocate to do it.’ On the part of the prisoner, many witnesses of high rank, and some connected with the government, were examined: among them were the duke of Richmond, lord Camden, Mr. Beaufoy, Mr. Sheridan, and Mr. Pitt himself; the latter of whom was obliged to *correct* his evidence, after Mr. Sheridan had established the fact, that he had been present at the meetings of a society held at the duke of Richmond’s, for procuring parliamentary reform, where delegates were assembled from different counties. The jury considered this case so clear, that they were not absent more than six minutes before they returned a verdict of not guilty. After such an acquittal, the attorney-general declined any farther prosecution of the members of the constitutional society; and on the first of December, a jury being impanelled *pro forma*, the rest of the prisoners were acquitted and discharged. Mr. Thelwall’s trial commenced the same day; and the charge was opened with great ability by Mr. serjeant Adair; but no new evidence was brought forward, except some very intemperate expressions used at public meetings. The prisoner was successfully defended by Messrs. Erskine and Gibbs; and all the other prosecutions were abandoned by the crown.

Thus ended these celebrated trials; and while we give due credit to Mr. Pitt for his prompt and vigorous, though in this case mistaken measures, to arrest evils, which, if suffered to increase, might have involved the country in revolutionary horrors; we must not deny their meed of praise to those honest juries, who maintained the integrity of our laws, and prevented

<sup>4</sup> He was at that time attorney-general to the prince of Wales.



the safeguard of our liberties from being turned into an instrument of tyranny, by opposing the doctrine of constructive treason. Had the prisoners been indicted for sedition, there can be but little doubt that they would have been convicted; and still less what would have been the result, under any circumstances, if they had been tried in Scotland. Their acquittal proved a fortunate event; for after this signal triumph of popular principles, the most factious lost the power of alleging that the liberties of Englishmen were on the decline: satisfied with their victory, the people relapsed into ancient habits of loyalty; the spirit of innovation gradually diminished; the passions of men became fixed on different objects; and the prosecution of the war with France grew into an object of more interest than the remodelling of the constitution.

In the mean time, the superiority of the British navy began to awaken public exultation, and to produce its wonted effects on the colonial possessions of our enemies. Soon after the commencement of hostilities, Tobago had been taken by a British squadron; and early in this year, a fleet, under Sir John Jervis and general Sir Charles Grey, was despatched against Martinique; which, after a vigorous resistance, surrendered to our arms on the twenty-third of March. At Fort Bourbon, where general Rochambeau commanded, so noble was the defence, that Sir Charles Grey, in his despatch, declared, 'there was scarcely an inch of ground untouched by the shot and shells of the besiegers.' Very honorable terms were granted to its gallant defender. Shortly after, the principal forts in San Domingo were wrested by colonel Whitelock from the republicans; while the wretched planters, a prey to the flames lighted up by the friends of emancipation at the beginning of the revolution, were totally ruined. Martinique was no sooner conquered, than the indefatigable commanders turned their arms with similar success against the fine island of St. Lucie; and then proceeded to Guadaloupe, where the British general made a descent at Gosier-bay on the eleventh of April: the landing was covered by lord Garlies in the *Winchelsea*, who placed his ship so near to the batteries, that the enemy's troops could not stand to their guns, which were soon silenced. At five in the morning of the twelfth, Sir Charles took by storm a strong post called fort Fleur d'Epée; where the troops were ordered not to fire, but to carry every thing with the bayonet: this success served to put them into immediate possession of Grande Terre, which produced a surrender of Basse Terre, on the twentieth, by capitulation, including the whole island, with Marie Ga-



lante, Desirada, and all its other dependencies. The terms were similar to those granted to Rochambeau. After these glorious successes, Sir Charles Grey returned to Martinique, leaving general Dundas to command at Guadaloupe.

The progress of our naval power was not so rapid in the Mediterranean; though even there its superiority was soon felt. The disaster at Toulon having paralysed the maritime force of the enemy in this quarter, lord Hood was enabled to carry the British troops, in February, to Corsica, which was in a state of revolt against the government. Three thousand soldiers and marines were landed; and after some inconsiderable successes, they nearly effected the reduction of the island by the capture of Bastia, which resisted our army, though joined by a considerable corps of Corsicans collected and sent by Paoli, till the nineteenth of May; when it capitulated on honorable terms. Calvi, the only remaining stronghold of the republicans, was besieged until the first of August, when it surrendered to the British arms.<sup>5</sup> The cession of Corsica, offered by Paoli and the aristocratical party to the king of England, was accepted; and efforts were made to confer the blessings of the British constitution on those rude islanders; the ill success of which project did not prevent a similar attempt at a later period of the war in Sicily, where the result was the same. It would have been much wiser to have taken Corsica, as an independent state, under our protection: the people would then have felt as a nation: but when one party had given up the country to the English, the natural consequence was, that the other looked to France.

A more glorious triumph, however, awaited the British navy nearer to our own shores. The French government had by great exertions got twenty-six sail of the line into a state fit for service at Brest; and being anxious about the safety of a large convoy from America, conveying an immense supply of corn and flour, naval stores, and colonial productions, which promised to relieve the scarcity at this time severely felt in France, they sent positive orders to admiral Villaret Joyeuse to put to sea; and he accordingly set sail on the twentieth of May. The

<sup>5</sup> At the siege of this place, the future hero of the British navy, Nelson, lost an eye: it was chiefly by his spirited exertions that the place was taken; but his services were wholly overlooked at home, although strongly brought forward by his commander-in-chief. It was on this occasion, that, instead of desponding or retiring from the service, he exclaimed, 'They have not done me justice; but never mind: I will have a gazette of my own.'



English admiral, lord Howe, aware of the expected convoy, had also put to sea early in this month with twenty-six ships of the line ; and in the morning of the twenty-eighth his advanced frigates discovered the enemy at a considerable distance on the weather-bow of the British admiral : they came down for some time in loose order, as if unapprised that the British fleet was in view : after hauling to the wind, when they came nearer, they were some hours before they could regularly form in order of battle ; which circumstance afforded time for the detached part of our fleet, under rear-admiral Pasley, to be placed advantageously for making an impression on their rear. A partial action ensued between the rearguard of their line and the vanguard of our squadron, in the course of which, the *Révolutionnaire*, of 110 guns, was so much damaged, that she struck to the *Audacious* ; but night coming on, a French ship fell in with her in the morning, and towed her into Rochefort. During the next day, manœuvres were repeated, each party endeavoring to gain the weather-gage of the other ; when lord Howe, at the head of several ships, passed through the French squadron, and then put about again in preparation to renew the attack ; but the rest of his fleet being at this time passing to leeward, and beyond the sternmost ships of the French line, the action was discontinued. At this time, rear-admiral Neilly joined the French commander-in-chief with three sail of the line and two frigates ; which reinforcement enabled him to detach his crippled ships from the fleet. A dense fog concealed the rival squadrons from each other during the next two days ; but lord Howe, having employed some masterly manœuvres, succeeded in obtaining the weather-gage of the enemy ; and early on the memorable first of June, as the sun burst out with unusual splendor, he discovered the French in order of battle at the distance of a few miles, and bore down in an oblique direction on their line. As he had the advantage of a strong wind, he was enabled to imitate the decisive manœuvre of the gallant Rodney ; and, breaking their line near the centre, to double with a preponderating force on one half of their squadron ; a desperate engagement ensued, in which extraordinary instances of valor were exhibited on both sides, though skill and discipline were manifestly in favor of the British. Half an hour had scarcely elapsed, before the French admiral, who had been engaged with lord Howe in the *Queen Charlotte*, was so roughly handled, that he sheered off, followed by most of the ships in his van, and leaving twelve, that were engaged in close action, to their fate :



these, although exposed to such superior forces, bravely maintained the conflict, until several on both sides were totally dismasted, and lay like logs on the water. The heroism of one ship, *Le Vengeur*, was never surpassed in the annals of naval warfare: though in a sinking state, her crew magnanimously stuck to their guns, continuing, even after the lower deck was immersed in water, rapidly to discharge the upper tier; and when the ingulging waves finally closed over her, they went down to the bottom with an enthusiastic cheer, and cries of *Vive la Republique! Vive la Liberté! Vive la France!*

Such, however, was the disabled state of the British fleet, that several of the vanquished ships escaped; some under a sprit-sail, or even a small piece of canvass raised on the stump of a foremast: six, however, remained in possession of lord Howe; *La Juste*, of eighty guns; *La Sans Pareille*, of eighty; *L'Amerique*, *L'Achille*, *L'Impétueux*, and *La Northumberland*, each of seventy-four. The French admiral's ship, *La Montagne*, of 120 guns, lost her captain, with 500 of her crew, in killed and wounded; so terrible had been the fire of the *Queen Charlotte*. In the ships taken the slaughter was prodigious; but the return, on board the English fleet, was only 290 killed and 858 wounded. The enemy's ships, after much difficulty, regained Brest-harbor, shattered, dismasted, and riddled with shot, having suffered a total loss of 8000 men; but they were consoled for this humiliating disaster by their attainment of the object for which the engagement had been risked: the American convoy, valued at £5,000,000 sterling, with an invaluable supply of provisions and naval stores, arrived safe in port a few days after the battle, and at a time when the reign of terror and civil dissensions had brought France to the very verge of famine.

But if the French received consolation in defeat, never was a victory more seasonable to the British government: the loyalty of the people, half extinguished by party divisions, awaked at the sound of their victorious cannon; the ancient rivalry of the two nations revived in all its force; and from this period may be dated the commencement of that firm union and zealous enthusiasm among the inhabitants of this country, which carried them triumphantly through the most dangerous contest in which they had ever been engaged.

Lord Howe was received in England with distinguished honors, and presented with a diamond-hilted sword of great value, by his majesty in person, on board the *Queen Charlotte*;



also with a splendid gold chain and medal:<sup>6</sup> each of the rear-admirals, Pasley and Bowyer, was created a baronet, with a pension of £1000 per annum; and admirals Greaves and Sir A. Hood were advanced to the peerage. Brilliant illuminations in the principal towns in England displayed the general exultation of the people; and large sums of money were subscribed for the widows and children of those killed in action.

About this time the British government became involved in a contention with the United States of America, which ultimately produced serious effects. Soon after the commencement of the war, orders were issued for detaining American vessels freighted with corn for France, and confiscating their cargoes, though not without paying both for them and their freight: the people highly resented this measure, as an attack on their independence; but their complaints were disregarded, while an order was afterwards issued to seize all American vessels carrying provisions and stores to the French colonies; and also to compel their ships, sailing from the British islands, to give security for landing their cargoes in British or neutral ports: in consequence of this, more than 600 American vessels were seized in the space of five months. Farther causes of complaint were given to the United States by the occupation of some ceded forts on the frontiers of Canada, and by a conference, which the governor, lord Dorchester, held with some Indian tribes: the American government, in retaliation, laid an embargo of thirty days on the British shipping in their ports, and appointed Mr. Jay its minister for composing the differences between the two countries: he arrived in the summer of this year, and delivered a memorial on the subject; in which, among other complaints, our government was accused of compelling American seamen to serve on board British ships of war. Mr. Pitt tendered a conciliatory answer; and both parties being inclined to peace, the dispute was at this time compromised. We must now revert to the military proceedings on the continent of Europe.

The advantages which had resulted from the levy *en masse* encouraged the committee of public safety to prepare with alacrity for another campaign; and 750,000 men, exclusive of

<sup>6</sup> In December, 1796, his majesty was also pleased to transmit gold chains and medals to the flag officers and captains, who were reported by lord Howe to have signalised themselves in the battle.



those in garrisons and hospitals, were ready to act on the offensive against the confederated monarchs. What rendered this immense force particularly formidable, was the ability, as well as the unanimity, with which it was conducted, and the military talent which was rising up among its ranks: the genius of Carnot had, from the first, selected able officers from the crowd which presented itself; and the plan of transferring them rapidly from one situation to another, gave ample opportunities for discovering those in whom confidence might be placed. Wielding at command this mighty and energetic mass, the central government had discovered the real secret of military operations; and by accumulating a preponderating force against one part of the line, and bringing up column after column to the attack, they soon acquired a decided superiority over the Austrians, who adhered with obstinate pertinacity to the system of extending their positions.

In the mean time, Austria and Prussia had made little or no addition to their military contingences: the emperor indeed had recommended the Germanic confederation to oppose the republic by a levy *en masse*, but he neglected to set them an example: Prussia vehemently opposed the plan, and not without reason; as tending to ruin agricultural districts, and as not likely to be effective, except in countries where the population was animated by a spirit similar to that which governed France; while the unsettled opinions of the lower classes in the monarchical states might render it a measure of perilous consequences: besides, the sincerity of Frederic had become very doubtful, from conferences of a suspicious kind which had been held between M. Kalkreuth and the French commissioners during the course of the winter; while the rivalry and jealousy of all the allies were so manifest, that on the sixth of January the duke of Brunswick resigned his command. In a letter addressed to the Prussian monarch on this occasion, after alluding to the vigor and unanimity displayed by the French, he goes on to say, 'that if, instead of co-operating with similar principles, each army acts separately and without concert with the others, without fixed plans, and without concord; the consequences to be expected are such as we have seen at Dunkirk, at Maubeuge, at the capture of Lyons, at the destruction of Toulon, and at the siege of Landau.' 'The same causes,' he says in conclusion, 'which have divided the allied powers, divide them still: the movements of the armies will again suffer as they have suffered; they will experience delay and embarrassments;



and these will prove the source of a train of misfortunes, the consequences of which are incalculable.'

Field-marshal Mollendorf succeeded the duke in command of the Prussian army; and an intimation to the prince of Saxe Coburg, that he had received orders from his court to march towards Cologne, was followed on the eighteenth of March by a proclamation, announcing Frederic William's actual secession from the coalition. This *ruse d'état* appears to have succeeded; for it almost immediately extracted the subsidy from the British government; great part of which, however, was diverted from its original purpose, to forward his designs on Poland.

At a general council of war held at Ath, to receive the projected arrangements of the court of Vienna, it was proposed that the prince of Saxe Coburg should continue at the head of the grand imperial army, and that general Clairfait should be appointed to command the auxiliary forces, the duke of York acting under his orders: this, however, his royal highness rejected with disdain; and the dispute was only settled by the determination of the emperor to take the field in person as supreme commander. On the ninth of April, his imperial majesty arrived at Brussels; from whence he proceeded to Valenciennes, where his presence was hailed with great joy: on the sixteenth, he reviewed the whole army, amounting to 150,000 men, on the heights above Cateau; and the following day they marched in eight columns to invest Landrecy: the fourth and fifth of these were formed from the army under the duke of York, who took on himself the direction of the former, while the latter was committed to Sir William Erskine:<sup>7</sup> this column, when proceeding to gain the Bois de Bohain, met with resistance at the village of Premont, where the French were strongly posted: Sir William, therefore, detached the second brigade of British infantry and the Austrian cuirassiers, with four squadrons of cavalry, under the command of general Harcourt, to turn their flank; while three battalions of the regiment of Kaunitz, supported by a well-directed fire from the artillery of the reserve under lieutenant-colonel Congreve, charged the enemy in front; by which manœuvre the British commander gained the redoubts that held him at bay, and

<sup>7</sup> The prince of Hesse Darmstadt commanded the first column; lieutenant-general Alvintzi the second; the emperor and prince Coburg the third; count Haddick the sixth; the hereditary prince of Orange the seventh; and the Dutch general Geusau the eighth.



accomplished his purpose. The siege of Landrecy was soon formed; and after ten days of open trenches, and a severe bombardment, which almost destroyed the town, that important fortress, which repelled the utmost efforts of prince Eugene in 1712, fell into the hands of the prince of Saxe Coburg. It was intended to form the basis of a series of operations against Paris. During the progress of this siege, the republicans made various attacks on the posts and corps which formed the long cordon of the allies, followed by a movement of their whole line, on the twenty-sixth of April: the corps which advanced against the duke of York near Cambray, when it arrived at the redoubts of Troisville, met with a vigorous resistance by the British guards in front, who were supported by prince Schwartzenburg at the head of a regiment of Austrian cuirassiers: at this moment, general Otto charged the enemy in flank with the English cavalry, and drove them back in confusion to Cambray, with a loss of thirty-five pieces of cannon and above 4000 men: nor was their centre more successful against the Austrians; who, having lately been reinforced, and being supported by a numerous artillery, repulsed the assailants with great loss. These advantages, however, on the side of the allies, were counterbalanced by a severe check experienced by general Clairfait, who was stationed at the extreme right of their line: on that side, the French had assembled 50,000 men under Souham and Moreau, who advanced on the twenty-fifth of April; when Clairfait, attacked by very superior forces, was driven back, with a loss of thirty pieces of artillery and 1200 prisoners, on Tournay: thither prince Coburg detached the duke of York for his support;<sup>8</sup> while he himself remained in the neighborhood of Landrecy to put that place in a state of defence.

Convinced, by the failure of their attack on the centre of the allies, that their force was too small in that quarter, the com-

<sup>8</sup> An example of Austrian etiquette, exhibited on occasion of this march, will speak volumes. In no instance did they permit foreign troops to pass through their garrisoned towns; and their own troops, co-operating with the British, were looked on in that light; so that permission to pass through Valenciennes was not accorded to them. Though liable to be called into action, for any thing they knew to the contrary, next day, and hastening by forced marches to the protection of their own general, the duke's army was driven from the paved road into heavy ground, where the horses could scarcely drag along the artillery and ammunition waggons. Could such people expect to conquer the republicans?



mittee of public safety now directed Jourdan to reinforce the army of the Moselle with 15,000 men from that of the Rhine; and, after leaving a corps of observation at Luxemburg, to march with 45,000 men on the Ardenne forest, and join the army of the Sambre. Thus 90,000 men were drawn to one point at the extreme left of the allies. On the tenth of May, this army crossed the river; but the allies having collected their forces to cover the important city of Mons, the republicans were defeated with considerable loss, and obliged to recross it: on the twentieth, they crossed it again, and returned to the charge; but on the twenty-fourth were surprised, and completely routed by the Austrians under prince Kamietz. The troops were flying in confusion to the bridges, when Kleber arrived with a reinforcement, to arrest the pursuing enemy, and save his army from destruction: nevertheless, they were a second time obliged to recross the Sambre, with a loss of twenty-five guns and 4000 men.

In the mean time, the allies had collected 90,000 troops in West Flanders, including 133 squadrons under the immediate command of the emperor; and the position of the French left wing suggested to them the design of cutting it off from the main body: for this purpose the confederated forces were divided into six columns, and directed by converging lines on the French corps at Turcoing; but the old system prevented what might have been a brilliant result to this project: such was the distance between the columns, and the want of due co-operation, that they did not arrive simultaneously at the point of attack; consequently, there was no unity or consistency in their proceedings; and although some slight advantages were gained on the seventeenth of May near Turcoing, the republicans, having concentrated their forces, were enabled to fall with irresistible force on the insulated columns of their opponents. At three in the morning of the eighteenth, general Souham, with 45,000 men, attacked the detached corps of general Otto and of the duke of York, while another body of 15,000 advanced against them from Lille: the troops under Otto were defeated with great loss; and those under his royal highness, though at first they defended themselves with great intrepidity, yet, finding the communication with their allies intercepted, and themselves nearly surrounded by superior forces, disbanded and took to flight; while the duke himself escaped only by the swiftness of his horse. In company with an Austrian general and two other officers, he entered a village, supposing it in possession of the allies; but on turning a



corner at full gallop, they found themselves opposite to a column of the enemy, which, supposing the duke to be at the head of a charge of cavalry, turned and fled; but not without a volley, which killed the Austrian general by his side: recovering, however, from their mistake, they pursued the remaining trio so closely, that they escaped with great difficulty to Tournay. Such was the defect of combination in prince Coburg's operations, that at the time when his central columns were overwhelmed by an enormous mass, with a loss of 3000 men and 60 pieces of cannon, two columns on the left, amounting to 30,000 men, under the archduke Charles and Kinsky, remained inactive; and Clairfait, with 17,000 on the right, came up too late to take a material part in the action.

On the twenty-second of May, Pichegru, who had assumed the command, renewed the attack with a force raised to 100,000 men, intending to force the passage of the Scheldt, and lay siege to Tournay: he succeeded in driving in the outposts; but the Hanoverians in that quarter, being reinforced by the English, under general Fox, and seven Austrian battalions, defeated his attempts at the village of Pont-a-chin, and drove the republicans off the field with a loss of 6000 men: the French general then determined to carry the war into West Flanders, where the country, intersected by hedges, was less favorable to the allied cavalry: accordingly, he laid siege to Ypres; while the emperor conducted 10,000 men, in person, to reinforce the army on the Sambre; and the right wing of the allies, thus weakened, remained in a defensive position near Tournay.

Meanwhile, the French generals, strongly urged by the commissioners of the convention, and constrained by authorities who appealed to the guillotine as their last argument, prepared for a third attempt to pass the Sambre: for this purpose, Kleber, toward the end of May, pushed forward his troops, though exhausted by fatigue, and almost in a state of starvation; and the consequence was a repulse: on the twenty-ninth, however, the indomitable republicans returned to the charge; and after an obstinate conflict, forced back the imperialists, and proceeded to the investment of Charleroi: but the arrival of the emperor changed the face of affairs; and the French were driven once more over the Sambre, with a loss of 2000 men. This check, however, was but of small importance; for on the day following, Jourdan came up, with a reinforcement of 40,000 fresh troops.

This overwhelming force, drawn by the sagacity of Carnot



against one point, eventually decided the fate of the campaign. In the first instance, the republicans sustained a severe check; for when they had proceeded to re-invest Charleroi, and had destroyed its principal outworks, the allies made astonishing efforts to relieve it: advancing by concentric columns, they penetrated the line of their adversaries in two places, and drove them again over the river, with a loss of 3000 men: this very success, however, proved injurious to their cause; for it induced the prince of Saxe Coburg to suppose that his left wing was now secure; he therefore detached all his disposable troops to the succor of Ypres and Clairfait, on the right; whereas it was against the other flank of his army that the republican force was directed.

On the eighteenth of June, the French crossed the Sambre for the fifth time, with 70,000 men, and again advanced against Charleroi, under the walls of which it was now evident that the battle was to be fought, which should decide the fate of Flanders: accordingly, the greater part of the allied forces was at length moved in that direction; the duke of York, with the British and Hanoverians, being alone left on the Scheldt, at a short distance from Clairfait, who had lately suffered some disastrous reverses.

In the mean time, although Jourdan had drawn off 40,000 men from the army of the Rhine, offering thereby the fairest opportunity of resuming offensive operations to the Prussians, who were in great force around Mayence; yet nothing of importance was attempted: even when the imperialist general, Michaud, having been strongly reinforced, was preparing for vigorous operations, the king of Prussia resisted every attempt of the British ambassador, stimulating him to execute the part assigned him by the treaty of the Hague: his whole attention was fixed on Poland; and nothing could induce him to give directions for prosecuting the war on the Rhine, before circumstances rendered it impossible to do so with advantage.

Very different was the conduct of Pichegru; for no sooner was the departure of the emperor for the army of the Sambre known, than, resolving to profit by the weakness of his opponents, he marched on Ypres. Clairfait remained firm in his intrenched camp at Thielt, expecting a movement by the centre of the allied army to his support; but this, having been betrayed to the enemy at Lisle, was prevented by a demonstration from the French centre: Clairfait, therefore, was compelled to attack alone; and being consequently worsted, was driven back to his former position; while 30,000 Austrians



lay inactive at Tournay, and 6000 English, sent from the coasts of Brittany, were reposing, after the fatigues of their voyage, at Ostend: Coburg indeed, made a tardy movement for the relief of Ypres; but, hearing of its fall, he returned on the nineteenth of June to Tournay.

The Austrians, having finally separated their forces from the English, moved them towards their left wing, with a view of succoring Charleroi, which was severely pressed by Jourdan. On the twenty-second, the prince of Saxe Coburg numbered 75,000 troops under his command; but he delayed to attack his adversary, who took advantage of this inactivity to press Charleroi so vigorously, that it capitulated on the twenty-fifth; and the garrison had scarcely left its gates, before the sound of Austrian cannon announced their tardy movement to its relief. Next day the celebrated battle took place on the plains of Fleurus, which broke the power of Austria in the Netherlands.

The French army, 89,000 strong, was posted in a semicircle round Charleroi, now become, instead of a weak point, the very key of their position: the imperialists, though inferior in numbers, still adhered to their old system of attacking the enemy at different points; and at daybreak on the twenty-sixth they came on for this purpose in five columns. The first, under the prince of Orange, attacked the left of the French under general Montaigu, and was, after various success, on the very point of carrying the village of Marchiennes-au-pont, and intercepting the whole communications of the republican army; when Jourdan, alarmed at their advance, ordered up Kleber to support his left. That intrepid general hastily erected several batteries against the enemy's fire, and pushed forward Bernadotte with some battalions to the aid of Montaigu; when the allies, being unsupported, and assailed at the same time in front and flank, fell back, and abandoned all the ground they had gained in that quarter.

In the mean time, the centre, where the village of Fleurus was occupied by 16,000 troops and strengthened by intrenchments, was the scene of an obstinate contest: the attack of the allies in front was successfully repulsed; but general Beaulieu, with their left wing, having carried the post of Lambusart on the French right, the republicans on the left were forced to give way; the important post of Fleurus, exposed both in front and flank, was on the point of being taken; and the central divisions were in full retreat; when Jourdan hastened to their rescue with six battalions, and checked the enemy's



advance : at the same time, Dubois with the cavalry overthrew the imperial infantry, and took fifty pieces of cannon : being, however, disordered by their quick advance, they were attacked in turn by the Austrian cuirassiers, obliged to leave the captured guns, and driven back on their own lines.

Meanwhile, the left wing of the allies under Beaulieu, after various attacks, carried the village of Lambusart, and drove the greatest part of the republican forces opposed to them across the Sambre ; but the rapid fire of the French artillery prevented them from obtaining complete success, or even debouching from the village. As affairs stood, the French were worsted in every quarter : the right, under Moreau, was driven back, and had in great part recrossed the river ; the left, under Montaigu, had done the same ; and the forces in the centre had been partly compelled to recede, while the grand redoubt which covered the village of Fleurus was in danger of being carried : at this moment, the prince of Saxe Coburg, having heard that Charleroi had fallen, ordered the allied forces to retire at all points ; as if that had been the only object for which they contended. Thus ended, in a drawn battle, what might have been a splendid victory ; and the loss of the Netherlands followed a contest, which would have led a spirited and able commander to the capital of France.

Prince Coburg retired to Nivelles, and soon afterwards took post at Mont St. Jean and Waterloo, in advance of the forest of Soignies, since rendered so famous in the annals of the war : Mons was soon afterwards abandoned, and the allied forces were concentrated before Brussels : several actions took place in the beginning of July between the rear guard of the allies and the French, at Mont St. Jean, Brain la Leude, and Sambre ; but prince Coburg found himself unable to maintain his position at Brussels, and fell back behind the Dyle.

The superiority of the republican forces was so great in Western Flanders, that Tournay was evacuated ; and Pichegru marched on Ghent to force back Clairfait, while he detached Moreau against the strong places on the coast ; where Nieuport, and Fort Ecluse, the key of the Scheldt, were taken, and the island of Cadsand was soon afterwards overrun. Clairfait, though reinforced by the British troops, which had marched from Ostend,<sup>9</sup> under lord Moira, could not make head against

<sup>9</sup> ' This town was evacuated on the first of July : the garrison at Nieuport might have been withdrawn at the same time ; but



Pichegru: having in vain attempted, in conjunction with Coburg, to cover Brussels, he also fell back behind the Dyle; while the duke of York retired in the same direction, and encamped between Malines and Louvain. This retreat of the allied powers enabled the victorious armies of Pichegru and Jourdan to unite before Brussels on the tenth of July.

The English, Hanoverian, and Dutch forces, amounting to 45,000 men, now took post behind the canal of Malines, to cover Antwerp and Holland; while the Austrians retired by Tirlemont on Liege, for the purpose of drawing nearer to their resources at Cologne and Coblenz. Thus, while the chief forces of the republicans were concentrated at Brussels, with their wings extending to Wilworde and to Namur, their opponents retired towards the north and south, diverging daily farther and farther from each other: this gave to an enterprising and powerful enemy the means of crushing them separately, and left him in a strong salient position, which would soon render the provinces of the Lower Rhine and the United States totally untenable. On the fifteenth, the canal of Malines was forced, and the duke of York retired to Antwerp, which he soon evacuated, and concentrated his whole forces in the neighborhood of Breda for the defence of Holland: in the mean time, Jourdan pursued his advantages against the prince of Saxe Coburg, taking Liege and Tongres, while the Austrians retired behind the Meuse; after which, nothing of importance was meditated, until Valenciennes and other frontier places, which had been captured by the allies at the commencement of the war, should be reduced. The evacuation of Flanders was regarded at the time as a matter of policy on the part of his imperial majesty; who, irritated by the want of energy and the disaffection of the people, intended that they should experience the difference between his mild government and that of the disciples of Robespierre. 'But,' says an accurate observer,<sup>10</sup> 'had this been the case, marshal Clairfait would assuredly have received a hint of his sovereign's intention; as a prodigious number of lives might have been

it was overlooked in the hurry of removing the stores from other places: 500 emigrants, found in the town after its surrender, fell into the hands of their enraged countrymen, and were drawn up in the dry ditch, exposed to the fire of artillery loaded with grape shot.' *Narrative of the War, by an Officer of the Guards, vol. ii. p. 77.*

<sup>10</sup> See *An accurate and impartial Narrative of the War, by an Officer of the Guards, vol. ii. p. 75.*



easily spared, which were sacrificed, while that unfortunate general was disputing the ground, inch by inch, with the invaders.' If, however, says the same authority, it afforded the emperor any consolation, in his misfortunes, to know that the Netherlanders smarted under the republican gripe, his feelings must have been gratified in a very peculiar manner: every young man capable of bearing arms found himself in requisition; the coin of the country was called in, and exchanged for assignats at par; merchandise and private property were indiscriminately seized; and the revolutionary tribunal was kept in constant employ by the commissioners sent to fraternise and unite Belgium with France. Among the numerous victims to their insatiable barbarity, were two of the most beautiful young women of Tournay: they had formed an attachment to two British officers; and after the evacuation of the town, letters from their absent lovers were found in their possession: accused of correspondence with the enemy, they were hurried to the fatal cart, and conveyed to Lille; nor did the merciless blade of the guillotine ever descend on more lovely or innocent martyrs.<sup>11</sup> Ghent was taxed to the amount of 7,000,000 livres: the convent of nobles in 1,000,000; that of Bodeloo in 800,000; and the mercantile houses in proportion: where there was no specie, goods were seized; all carriages were considered in a state of requisition, and the owners ordered, under pain of death, to send them to a general repository: Bruges was taxed in 4,000,000, of which the clergy were to pay 2,000,000, and the nobles 1,000,000; Ostend in 2,000,000; and every other town or village in proportion to its size: Lille and Dunkirk were the grand dépôts for this plunder; and in order to expedite its transportation, as well as the harvest, all young men from fifteen to thirty were constrained to work on the canal leading from Nieuport to Dunkirk: no other alternative was allowed but submission or the guillotine.

To hasten the reduction of Valenciennes and other fortresses, a bloody decree was passed by the convention, ordering the republican commanders to refuse quarter to any garrison which should not surrender within twenty-four hours after the first summons: the French generals, however, who were by no means deficient in honor and humanity, refused to execute this infamous order,<sup>12</sup> which was soon rendered nugatory by the

<sup>11</sup> Narrative of the War, vol. ii. p. 76.

<sup>12</sup> Some time before, a decree had been issued by the con-



fall of Robespierre on the twenty-eighth of July. So sanguinary had the reign of this monster become, that after his rage had been satiated with all that was dignified in rank, eminent in science, and lovely in virtue, the lower classes began to feel the approach of danger to themselves; his own creatures trembled for their lives; and the convention, which he had undertaken to decimate, alarmed for its safety, labored to undermine his influence, and to work out his downfall. Tallien, an intrepid man, who had been awakened to better feelings, was at the head of the conspirators: Barrere, Billaud, Varennes, Cambon, as well as the friends of Danton, enlisted under his banners; and the dictator, with his executioner Henriot, the eloquent but inexorable St. Just, Dumas the atrocious president of the revolutionary tribunal, Couthon, Le Bas, and the younger Robespierre, were denounced in the hall of the convention, and arrested: liberated from prison by the municipality of Paris, these decemvirs had nearly lighted up a civil contest in the streets of the capital; but the populace, satiated with blood, now failed them; a part perished by their own hands, and the rest under the axe of that guillotine with which they had desolated their country.

At four in the morning of July 29, all Paris was in motion to witness the execution of the tyrant: he was placed on the car between Henriot and Couthon, the latter of whom wept with terror, while the former was uttering blasphemies. The crowd, which had long ceased to attend the executions, now exhibited the most extravagant joy; while the blood from Robespierre's jaw, which had been broken by the pistol-shot of Meda, who arrested him, burst through the bandage, and overflowed his dress: his face was ghastly pale; he shut his eyes; but could not close his ears against the execrations of the multitude. A woman, rushing from the midst of it, exclaimed,—‘Murderers of all my kindred, your agony fills me with joy: descend to hell, covered with the curses of every mother in France.’ Twenty of his comrades were executed before him; and when he ascended the scaffold, the executioner, tearing the bandage from his face, caused the lower jaw to fall; on which he uttered a yell that filled every heart with horror: for some

vention to give no quarter to the English and Hanoverian soldiers; to which the duke of York, with the true spirit of a British prince, replied by an order of the day, ordering all French captives to be treated with the same humanity as before; and reminding his army, ‘that mercy to the vanquished is the brightest gem in a soldier's character.’



minutes the frightful figure was exhibited to the crowd: he was then placed under the fatal axe, and the last sounds that met his ears were the exulting shouts which hailed his exit from the world. Thus ended the reign of terror, the most cruel and revolting tyranny which mankind had ever yet witnessed: but though sentiments of humanity began to appear once more in the French government, there was no relaxation in that energy and spirit which pushed its armies on to conquest.

While the fortune of war was, after a sanguinary contest, inclining to the French arms on the northern frontier, events, of less importance indeed, but not less favorable to their cause, occurred in other quarters: the defection of Prussia from the common cause paralysed all operations on the Rhine; and the reduction of Lyons and Toulon, by liberating the armies employed against those cities, gave an early and decisive superiority to the republican cause in the south. Before the middle of April, the army of the Alps amounted to 75,000 men; opposed to which were only 40,000 Piedmontese and 10,000 Austrian auxiliaries: but the committee of public safety, pressed as they were in other quarters, contented themselves with enjoining their commanders to drive the enemy over the mountains, and to seize the passes; leaving to a future year the favorite scheme of bursting into Italy. After a defeat of general Sarret at Little St. Bernard, and some repulses at Mont Cenis, general Dumas made himself master of the first pass of this latter barrier on the twenty-third of April; and in the middle of next month he took the second, with a loss to the Sardinians of 600 prisoners and twenty pieces of cannon: he thus secured the whole ridge of the Alps between Savoy and Piedmont; and the key of Italy was in the hands of the republicans. On the frontiers of Nice the operations of the French leaders were directed by Napoleon Buonaparte. His design was to turn Saorgio by its left, and cut off the retreat of its garrison, by the great road from over the Col di Tende. The attacking force was divided into three columns: the first, of 20,000 men, under Massena, advanced on the first of April, with twenty pieces of cannon, intending to pass between Saorgio and the sea; the second, of 10,000, under Dumerbion, remained in front of the enemy; while the third, of equal force, directed its course to the upper extremities of the valleys of the Vesubia, to communicate with the army of Savoy by Isola. All were eminently successful: Massena, having traversed the neutral territory of Genoa as far as Garessio, found himself in advance



of the main body of the enemy intrenched on the western side of the mountains. Guided by Rusca, an intrepid chasseur, well acquainted with these Alpine heights, he pursued his success; and by a skilful combination of his forces, stormed the redoubts of the Col Ardente, reached Tanardo, and the heights which command the pass of the Briga: in the mean time, Dumerbion's attack of the centre had been equally fortunate, and the Sardinians, having evacuated the celebrated camp of Rauss, fell back towards the Col di Tende: his leading columns approached the fortress of Saorgio, while Massena's troops appeared on the heights behind it; and this rocky citadel surrendered at the first summons: nor was the French left less successful, which ascended the Vesubia, and drove the allies back to the Col de Finisterre; while general Serrurier cleared the valley of the Tinea, and established a communication with the army of Savoy by Isola. To complete these manœuvres, Dumerbion despatched Garnier to seize the Col de Finisterre, while he attacked the Col di Tende with his own centre. Both these operations succeeded; so that before the end of May, the republicans were masters of all the passes in the maritime Alps; and while, from the summit of Mont Cenis they threatened a descent on the valley of Susa and Turin, from the Col di Tende they could advance directly to the siege of the important fortress of Coni. Napoleon wished to push straight on to the conquest of Italy; but the reverses at Keyzerslauten inducing the government to withdraw 10,000 men from the army of the Alps in order to support that of the Rhine, they left the conquerors of these aerial citadels to repose in them after the fatigues they had undergone.

On the side of Spain, the war assumed a still more decided character: the reduction of Toulon had enabled the central government to detach general Dugommier, with half the forces employed against that city, to reinforce the army on the eastern Pyrenees; and it was resolved to act offensively at both extremities of that mountain barrier. Encamped under the cannon of Perpignan, the French general took the most active measures for infusing vigor and discipline into his army, while that of the Spaniards was proportionally neglected. On the twenty-seventh of March, the republicans advanced toward the enemy's position; a strong redoubt was taken; and soon afterwards, the Spanish general, Dagobert, was taken off by a malignant fever, which had sent above 10,000 of his men to the hospitals: the marquis Amarillas, who succeeded him, then drew off his forces into the intrenched camp at Boulon, and was



shortly afterwards superseded in the command by general La Union, who injudiciously transferred his head quarters to Ceret: he was there attacked, on the thirtieth of April, by the whole French force: a redoubt in his centre was stormed; and the Spanish army retreated in confusion; while the French made themselves masters of the road to Bellegarde, by which the Spaniards were cut off from the regular pass over the mountains into their own country: being seized with a panic, they fled in confusion over the hills, and could only be rallied under the cannon of Figueras, leaving 140 guns, 1500 men, 800 mules, with all their ammunition and baggage, in the hands of the enemy. After some other successes, the sieges of Bellegarde and Collioure, the most important places occupied by the Spaniards on the French side of the Pyrenees, were undertaken: marshal Navarro, with 7000 men in garrison, made a gallant defence of the latter fortress; but the ardor of republican enthusiasm, and the skill of French engineers, who transported artillery to places deemed inaccessible, produced its surrender on the twenty-sixth of May.

At the other end of the Pyrenean chain, nothing of importance was undertaken till June; when, stimulated by the advantages gained in Roussillon, and assured of the organisation of their new levies, the French government determined to invade Spain at both extremities of the Pyrenees: the irruption on the west took place in three columns by the valley of Bastan, from the whole of which, by the end of July, the Spaniards were driven; their intrenched camp, defended by 200 pieces of cannon, on the Bidassoa, was taken; and Fontarabia surrendered at the first summons: on the fourth of August, St. Sebastian, though garrisoned by 1700 regular troops, capitulated without firing a shot. Thus the French were firmly stationed in the Spanish territory, with all their wants abundantly supplied.

In the mean time, Bellegarde was reduced to the utmost extremity; and La Union, reinforced by Catalonian levies, made the most strenuous efforts to relieve it, by an impetuous attack on the right wing of the French, at the head of which was Augereau; but his plans were defeated by the conduct of that general; and after a few days Bellegarde capitulated. The Spanish commander excused himself by the insubordination and misconduct of his troops, who for the most part threw away their arms, and took to flight: a battalion was decimated for its cowardice; and La Union, despairing of success, solicited his dismissal.



Discouraged by these reverses, the Spanish government made proposals for peace; but they were thought so inadmissible, that Dugommier was ordered 'to return an answer from the cannon's mouth.' In the mean time, the Spanish commander had leisure to strengthen his apparently inaccessible position with 250 cannon, in two lines, along a succession of heights nearly seven leagues in extent; while an intrenched camp around Figueras offered him a secure retreat in case of disaster. On the night of the sixteenth of November, the French attacking army, 30,000 strong, advanced in three columns: the right, under the command of Augereau, after an arduous march of eighteen hours over rocks and precipices, drove the Spaniards, under general Courten, from the camp of La Madeleine, and carried the intrenchments in that quarter; but the left, under general Lauret, was repulsed by the tremendous fire of the Spanish batteries: the brave Dugommier, while preparing to support him, was killed by a shell; but Perpignon, who succeeded to the command, ably extricated Lauret from his perilous situation. Augereau, however, had vigorously pursued his success; and, moving his troops towards the centre, forced the grand redoubt, though bravely defended by 1200 men: the Spaniards then abandoned the heights, with all their artillery, and took refuge in their camp at Figueras.

The republican troops, as usual, followed up their success. Perpignon, wisely judging that the Spaniards were weakest on the left, reinforced Augereau with two fresh brigades, and on the twentieth of November moved all his forces to the attack. General Bon, leading the vanguard of the right wing over tracts hardly considered passable by single persons, repeatedly crossed the river Muga; and, ascending the mountain Escaulas under a tremendous fire from the Spanish redoubts, carried the central intrenchment at the point of the bayonet. General La Union, hastening with the reserve to the redoubt of La Rosere, which was considered impregnable, fell on the spot; the fort was stormed, and its whole garrison put to the sword: the rest of the redoubts were then evacuated and blown up; the troops fled in headlong haste, overthrew a column of their own countrymen coming up to their defence, and rushed in utter dismay within the walls of Figueras. A few days afterwards, the garrison, which consisted of 9000 men, and was amply provided with provisions and stores of all sorts, laid down their arms; and the strongest place in Spain was delivered up to the invaders.

We must now return to the operations of war on the northern



frontier, which did not seem likely to be stopped even by the approach of winter. The army of the north was 70,000 strong; that of the Sambre and Meuse, nominally rated at 145,000, had about 120,000 effective men; while the duke of York had scarcely 50,000 to protect the United Provinces; and Clairfait, who had assumed the command which Saxe Coburg resigned, could muster only 100,000 to maintain the imperial authority in the Flemish provinces: but, considered morally, the inequality between the contending armies was still greater.

On the twenty-seventh of August, Condé surrendered after the example of Quesnoy; in both which instances it was strongly suspected that French gold had stronger influence than their bayonets: on the thirtieth, general Micovini delivered up the keys of Valenciennes to the republicans, after securing good terms for his garrison; and there, beside the usual magazines, immense stores fell into the hands of the enemy, consisting of heavy baggage of the British army, with the standards of its cavalry.<sup>13</sup> All anxiety about his rear being thus removed, and being reinforced by Moreau's division, Pichegru resumed offensive operations by the invasion of Holland; while the duke of York, with little more than half his numbers, had to defend a frontier twenty leagues in extent. His royal highness at first took up a defensive position behind the river Aa; but the French, having passed the morass of Piel, though deemed an insuperable barrier between the contending powers, suddenly attacked all the advanced posts of the British right on the fourteenth of September; when that of Boxtel was forced, and 1500 of the Hesse Darmstadt troops were surrounded and made prisoners. As the whole line then became untenable, general Abercromby was sent to retake it; but found the enemy so strongly posted, that he was obliged to retreat; and the duke himself retired to the right bank of the Meuse, leaving the important places of Bergen-op-Zoom, Breda, and Bois-le-duc to their own resources.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> 'The Austrians,' says an accurate observer, 'on their retreat from Tournay, certainly suspected that Condé would be wrested from the emperor, as they carefully removed their own stores from that fortress, though it was by Coburg's advice that the duke of York made use of it as a dépôt.' *Accurate and impartial Narrative of the War*, vol. ii. p. 85.

<sup>14</sup> 'The French videttes,' says the officer above quoted, 'were advanced in many places to the opposite side of the river, and frequently conversed with the British soldiers; expressing great regard for their national character, and assuring



Meanwhile, the army of the Sambre under Jourdan, being divided into six columns, prepared on the eighteenth of September to attack the Austrians; who, after several ineffectual attempts to make a stand, finally evacuated their positions on the Meuse, and retired toward Rolduc and Aix la Chapelle: Jourdan quickly followed them; and, while Kleber with 15,000 men blockaded Maestricht, he drove their discomfited forces to a strong position behind the Roer. On the second of October, he led his army, 100,000 strong, and all highly disciplined, against the Austrians, who occupied a series of heights behind the river, from whence their numerous train of artillery kept up a destructive fire: but nothing could arrest the enthusiasm of the republicans; the grenadiers, with Bernadotte at their head, plunged into the stream, and took the heights; general Scherer also forced the passage of the river, and made himself master of Dueren; while Clairfait, who had maintained himself bravely in the centre, was obliged to retreat with a loss of 3000 men, and to cross the Rhine. The day following, Jourdan entered Cologne, and by the twentieth of October extended his forces to Bonn: soon afterwards the siege of Maestricht was undertaken in earnest; 200 pieces of artillery were sent down the Meuse, which spread destruction through the city; and on the fourth of November, the garrison, despairing of relief, surrendered that noble fortress, with 350 pieces of cannon, into the hands of the French. After this event, and the capture of the castle of Rheinfels by the army of the Moselle, there remained to the Austrians nothing of all their possessions on the left of the Rhine, but Luxemburg and Mayence.

When the duke of York retreated, Pichegru laid siege to Bois-le-duc; a strong place at the confluence of three streams, and important to the republicans as a base for their future operations. At this period, the Dutch patriots began openly to avow their principles, the stadtholder's party decreased daily,

them that Pichegru's army received with universal disgust the decree of the convention, to grant their brave enemies no quarter. They would frequently hold forth for hours with native garrulity, winding up their remarks with this good and wholesome advice:— 'Englishmen, go home: you have no business here; you are too honest to be leagued with the Austrians and Prussians: they will soon leave you in the lurch; and as to the Hessians, the landgrave will turn them all over to us to-morrow, if the convention offers him a ducat a day more than you now pay him.' These conversations usually ended with our men striking up 'God save the king;' and theirs, *Ah ça ira*, or the *Carmagnol*.' vol. ii. p. 88.



and great dissensions prevailed in the principal cities of the United Provinces. Though the means of defence at Bois le duc had been greatly neglected both by the duke of York and the States-General, the mounds of the dikes were pierced, and the inundation succeeded in a great degree; but the French having taken the fortress of Crevecœur, which commanded the sluices of Bois-le-duc, and which surrendered almost at the first shot, they were enabled to draw off the water, and form the investment of the place: after a defence most disgraceful to the Dutch arms, it capitulated on the ninth of October; and here again more than 400 unfortunate emigrants were butchered *en masse* at the head of the French army. After this loss, the duke distributed his forces along the Waal, but was soon driven across that river: he then stationed part of his troops in an intrenched camp under the guns of Nimeguen; distributing the remainder in a line round Thiel, and between the Waal and the Leek, communicating with the Dutch corps at Gorcum, in the hope of being permitted to winter there undisturbed: in the mean time, Pichegru invested Grave and Venloo, the latter of which places surrendered even before the works were injured. These successes, however, were only a prelude to more decisive results: toward the end of October, Pichegru undertook the siege of Nimeguen: the duke of York approached with 30,000 men; and in the beginning of November, a considerable part of the garrison, principally composed of British troops, sallied out, under general De Burgh, against the enemy's works: advancing under a very heavy fire, and leaping into the trenches, without drawing a trigger, they drove the besiegers from their position with the bayonet, occasioning them a loss of 500 men: this success, however, was only temporary; two days afterwards, the French opened two batteries on the bridge of boats, and one on the town; when the allied commanders hastily evacuated the place, and marched towards Thiel, leaving 2500 men under general De Burgh, which, together with the Dutch, were thought to be a sufficient garrison: but these troops, discouraged by the retreat of their fellow-soldiers, and terrified by the redoubled fire of the French, abandoned the place next night. The British and Hanoverians, having effected a retreat, burned the bridge of boats down to the water's edge; and about 600 Dutch were left to pass over on a temporary flying bridge they had nearly effected a passage; when a chance shot carried away the mast to which the hawser was attached, on which the flying bridge depended: it consequently swayed round,



and was hurried by the current toward the town; while the troops on it suffered severely by an incessant fire before they could obtain a parley. Thus fell this splendid fortress, which rendered the republicans masters of the passage of the Waal.

While the Dutch loudly reprobated the abandonment of this important place by their allies,<sup>15</sup> and an opinion was spread in Holland that their cause was hopeless; the committee of public safety, guided by the enterprising genius of Carnot, pushed on their troops to fresh conquests: accustomed to find all difficulties vanish before republican enthusiasm, they resolved to prosecute their successes in the midst of a rigorous winter, and to render its severity the means of overcoming the natural defences of the United Provinces.

Such, however, was the short-sighted policy of the States-General, that they imagined it possible for them to negotiate a separate peace, while the French were on the very eve of reaping the fruit of all their labors: notwithstanding treaties and obligations, Dutch ambassadors were sent to request that the ruling faction at Paris would grant them such terms as their known good *faith* and *generosity* should dictate. The convention cajoled the petitioners with delusive promises, and at the same time sent orders to their generals to pass the Waal, and force their way to Amsterdam: in this they depended on the disaffection of the people to accelerate their advances, more than the most formidable inundations could check them; in which opinion they were confirmed by the frequent invitations sent from the principal towns, with promises of a cordial reception.<sup>16</sup>

Early in December, the duke of York, conceiving the campaign finished, set out for England, leaving to general Walmoden the perilous task of protecting a divided country with an in-

<sup>15</sup> Without reason; for the duke of York had only 30,000 forces to oppose to 70,000, and the Rhine in his rear.

<sup>16</sup> 'One of those enterprising messengers from the disaffected patriots was discovered on the fourth of December, attempting to cross the Waal; and an address found on him, signed by 3000 of the principal inhabitants of Amsterdam, promising every effort to put that city into Pichegru's hands, and encouraging him to push forward without delay. This daring adventurer was apprehended by a Hanoverian officer, while he was endeavoring to strike a good bargain with a skipper, who demanded forty ducats to carry him over the river: the ambassador imagined twenty a sufficient bribe, and lost his life in trying to save a paltry sum; so strongly is the love of gold engrafted in a Dutchman's disposition.' Accurate and impartial Narrative, &c. vol. ii. p. 107.



ferior, defeated, and dispirited army : in the mean time, sickness among them increased with the increasing severity of the weather ; and the total inattention, at that time paid to the comfort of our suffering soldiers, now appears almost incredible.<sup>17</sup> Scarcely any accommodations were prepared for the sick in the hospitals ; where, so far from there being any thing to cover them,

<sup>17</sup> 'Abuses,' says the same intelligent officer already often quoted, 'unheard of in any former war, existed in almost every department ; and our helpless countrymen were given up to the mercy of surgeons' mates, furnished by a cheap contract, and deputy commissioners, whose interest it was to deprive them of every shadow of enjoyment. The enormous sum of £40,000 had been drawn for, during this campaign, to supply the sick with wine ; and such was the infamous behavior of the medical staff, that the surgeons and mates are very much belied indeed, if they were not, many of them, in the constant habit of robbing the sick, and applying that necessary article to their own use ; preferring the pleasure of carousing over flagons of heady port, to the drudgery of alleviating the pangs of their miserable patients : so that when a soldier fell sick, and was ordered to the hospital, his comrade would exclaim, 'Ah, poor fellow ! we shall see thee no more ; for thou art under orders for the shambles.' When we consider how many brave men were thus sacrificed, and that from fifteen to twenty guineas bounty money was publicly offered for recruits ; would it not have been even more economical in government to have employed Rush, Lind, and other respectable men, who offered their services at the commencement of the war, but which were deemed exorbitant ; than to have imported at so much per head, such numbers of inexperienced pretenders to science, who scarcely knew in which hand to hold a lancet, or in what manner to apply a tourniquet ?' p. 109. On the same authority, it is stated, with too much truth, 'that at this period, the catalogue of school-boys, who were promoted to the rank of field-officers over the heads of deserving old soldiers, was swelled out to an unprecedented size. The army brokers carried on the most shameful and destructive traffic in the open face of day : in a few weeks they would advance any beardless youth, who could come up to their price, from one new-raised corps into another ; and, for a farther douceur, by an exchange into an old regiment, would procure him a permanent station in the standing army ; while they laughed to scorn the superannuated drudges, who had been braving the vicissitudes of climates long before these upstart chieftains were born.' p. 92. The redress of these and a thousand other grievances, the nation owes to the admirable conduct of the late duke of York, when he became commander-in-chief : it is impossible to rate too highly the services which he rendered to his country, by the internal arrangements and domestic economy introduced by him into every department of the army.



there was but a scanty allowance even of straw: hundreds were found dead on the banks of the rivers and canals, because no quarters were to be found for them in the towns: at the same time, the animosity of our Dutch allies had increased to such a pitch against us, that a straggling Englishman became an object, not only of ill-treatment, but of frequent assassination. After several ineffectual attempts made by the French to cross the Waal, the hardest frost set in, about the middle of December, that had been remembered since the year 1739, when heavy cannon were transported on the ice over both the Waal and the Rhine. General Walmoden, seeing the Meuse frozen in his front, while the Rhine and Waal were charged with floating ice in his rear, and justly fearing that the same cold which exposed his line to attack would render his retreat impracticable,—passed his heavy cavalry to the other side of the Waal, evacuated his magazines and hospitals on Dwynter, and ordered the prince of Hesse Darmstadt to abandon the isle of Bommel, as soon as he heard that the enemy had passed the Meuse.

At the end of December, the French army crossed that river, making an irruption by concentrated forces against a cordon of posts: the result was, that the Dutch fled, some to Utrecht, and others to Gorcum, leaving sixty pieces of cannon and 1600 prisoners in the hands of the republicans: these latter even made themselves masters of several posts on the Waal, which they crossed; but as the ice did not yet permit the passage of heavy artillery, Pichegru withdrew his forces again to the left bank: the right of the Dutch position was assailed with success, and Breda invested; while Grave capitulated after a long and honorable resistance.

Seeds of dissension now began to appear among the allied generals: Walmoden wished to concentrate his forces on the Waal, between Nimeguen and St. André, against the French, who were making preparations to cross that river; but the prince of Orange insisted on moving the allied troops toward Gorcum, in order to cover the direct road to Amsterdam. Thus thwarted in the only rational mode of carrying on the campaign, Walmoden resolved to abandon the United Provinces to their fate; and, with a view to secure his retreat to Hanover, he concentrated the English forces behind the Linge, and covered them on the left by the Austrian contingents.

The States-General, in despair, made proposals of peace to the French government, offering to recognise the republic, and pay down 200,000,000 francs: but the committee of



public safety, elated with success, and anxious to establish a revolutionary government in Holland, rejected the terms, and ordered Pichegru instantly to invade that devoted country.

On the eighth of January, with 70,000 men, he crossed the Waal at various points; the capture of Thiel, by Moreau, facilitating his passage. This formidable host attacked the remains of the British army, and compelled them, after the most gallant resistance, to retreat: without tents, and unable to procure cantonments, the unfortunate soldiers were obliged to pass the nights, during this tremendous winter, in the open tobacco-sheds, or under the canopy of an inclement sky. But what were these sufferings compared with those of the sick and wounded? Removed, as they were, in open waggons, exposed to the intensity of the frost, frequently without any victuals till the army halted, and then only scantily supplied; littered down in cold churches on a short allowance of dirty straw, without the comfort of a single blanket;—it is no wonder they expired martyrs to this unpardonable neglect.

The situation of the stadtholder now became very critical: abandoned by Walmoden's army, unable with his own troops to make head against the republicans, and in daily expectation of a revolution,—his only resource was expatriation: having therefore assembled the States-General, he avowed his resolution; recommended them to make a separate peace with the enemy; and embarked for Great Britain.

Meanwhile, the French generals paused in their career, anticipating the revolutionary movements which soon followed. Amsterdam led the way; where the magistrates resigned their authority, and the democratic leaders were installed in their places: the tricolor flag was then displayed over the Hotel de Ville, and the republican troops entered the city amidst the acclamations of the populace: on the same day, the left wing of the army made themselves masters of Dordrecht, containing 600 pieces of cannon and 10,000 muskets, with an immense store of ammunition: from thence it proceeded through Rotterdam to the Hague, where the States-General were assembled: at the same time, a body of cavalry and artillery crossed the Zuyder Zee on the ice, and took possession of the fleet which lay frozen up in the Texel: immediately afterwards, the province of Zeeland capitulated to the invaders, whose right wing, continuing its successes, obliged the English to abandon the line of the Issel: Friesland and Groningen were successively evacuated; and after a retreat, perhaps unequalled in the annals of military hardship, our exhausted troops arrived at



Bremen; where, after a halt of some weeks, they embarked for England. On the twenty-seventh of January, the provisional representatives of the people of the United States assembled; when a decree passed for the total abolition of the stadtholderate; and under the protection of France a new provisional government was established, for what was now denominated the Batavian republic.

Sweden and Denmark, happily removed by distance from the scenes we have been contemplating, persevered in their determination to observe an impartial neutrality: a convention had been concluded between them on the twenty-seventh of March, by which they agreed to protect the freedom of commerce in the Baltic, on the principles of the armed neutrality of 1780; equipping jointly a fleet of sixteen sail of the line for that purpose: by the tenth article, the Baltic was declared to be a neutral sea, absolutely inaccessible to the armed vessels of the belligerent powers. The little state of Geneva being completely under French influence, its constitution was new-modelled with a much greater tendency to democracy; in consequence of which many emigrations took place.

With respect to Poland, its fate was sealed in this eventful year. The czarina, by her ambassador, having demanded that its army should be reduced to 16,000 men, the Poles clearly saw what would follow, and resolved once more to try the fate of arms: they required, however, a leader; and found one in the celebrated Kosciusko, who had learned the science of war under the immortal Washington. The Russians, proceeding still farther in their demands, required possession of the arsenal of Warsaw; and were preparing to seize it, when Kosciusko advanced, and defeated their forces in the field, while the citizens of Warsaw rose and drove them from the capital. Soon afterwards, the Prussian troops, which had quailed in honorable warfare, took up the trade of brigands with great spirit; and having defeated Kosciusko, joined the Russians for the investment of Warsaw: being, however, called off by an insurrection in South Prussia, the Austrians next appeared on the frontiers; and the Polish army being weakened to oppose them, Kosciusko was defeated by the Russians, wounded, and taken prisoner: Suwarrow, on the refusal of the king to surrender the capital, led up his army, stormed it, and with his usual brutality gave orders to allow no quarter. Poland was now partitioned between the plunderers, and ceased to be a kingdom; the patriots being proscribed, their property confiscated, and Stanislaus ordered into



Russia, where he spent the remainder of his days in captivity. Such was the display of the great antagonist principle, now arrayed against the democratic spirit of France: but however we may lament the example, or compassionate the miseries of Poland, we must confess, with an eminent writer, 'that she fell the victim of her own dissensions; of the chimera of equality insanelly pursued, and the rigor of aristocracy unceasingly maintained; of extravagant jealousy of every superior, and merciless oppression of every inferior rank. The eldest born of the European family was the first to perish, because she had thwarted all the ends of social union; because she had united the turbulence of democratic to the exclusiveness of aristocratical societies; because she had the vacillation of a republic without its energy, and the oppression of a monarchy without its stability. Such a system neither could nor ought to be maintained: the internal feuds of Poland were more fatal to human happiness than the despotism of Russia; and the growth of improvement among its people was as slow as among the ryots of Hindostan.'<sup>18</sup>

The British parliament assembled on the thirtieth of December; and in the speech from the throne, while the disasters of the late campaign were admitted, the necessity of persisting in the war was strongly urged; additional efforts and increased vigor being represented as the only possible means of producing successful results. An official intimation was also given of the intended marriage of the prince of Wales with the princess Caroline, daughter of the duke of Brunswick; and the commons were requested to make provision for such an establishment, as they might think suitable to the rank and dignity of the heir apparent.

The address, in answer to the king's speech, was seconded by Mr. Canning; who, having in a former session maintained that monarchy was essential to the peace of every country in Europe, and that there could be no tranquillity for the continent or Great Britain while the government of France continued republican;—was a fit organ of the minister in upholding an address which inculcated the same principle. After defending his majesty's ministry against the imputation of the calamities and disasters of the war being the result of their ignorance and mismanagement, he as usual opened his fire on the opposition; but, in ridiculing their warnings and predictions, he observed, 'It was true, they had foretold the de-

<sup>18</sup> Alison, vol. ii. p. 475.



sertion of our allies, as well as the astonishing exertions of the enemy; and he could not but confess, that was, unfortunately, the result: it was, however, no difficult matter to prophesy disappointment and ill success: if the prediction proved false, gentlemen would feel too much satisfaction in the success of their country to think of the prediction; if it proved true, those who made it would triumph, as they would certainly feel some satisfaction in their superior sagacity.' When he thus gave credit to the opposition for their predictions, he claimed also some credit for those on his own side of the question; for when jacobinism was at its greatest height, when its influence circulated through every part of the French government, and when Robespierre governed the country with the most absolute sway; even then its fall was foretold in that house, and happily with truth: he wished, however, not to be misunderstood: he did not mean, that by the accession of the moderates to the sovereign power in France, the possibility of our treating with them had become greater; because the only difference between them and the jacobins was, that they professed the intentions, though they had not the power of the latter: their hostility to this country was equal to that of the jacobins; and the house would have an opportunity of judging what reliance could be placed on their moderation, by the terms which they would give to the Dutch, who were not the instigators of the war, but were compelled to join in it; and if the terms they gave to the Dutch were hard, what might this country expect? If we could even have a peace now with France, it would be an insecure one: it must be a peace, with all the inconveniences and expenses of a war establishment; such a peace as this country would never assent to.

Mr. Pitt was this evening not a little mortified at the defection of Mr. Wilberforce, who had hitherto supported all the measures of administration, but who now expressed himself as alarmed at the terrible doctrines which had been promulgated from the throne, and reiterated from the ministerial side of the house. A perpetual war, which could only cease with the restoration of the French monarchy, or with a total ruin of our own country, was to him a startling proposition, calculated to shock his principles and appal his feelings: he deprecated both the speech and the address; and observed of Mr. Canning, that, 'hurried away by his eloquence, he had made assertions which it was impossible to maintain, and had asked questions which it was unfortunately but too easy to answer.' He then took an extensive view of the comparative



state of both countries, after a long and sanguinary conflict, in which both had been sufferers in no ordinary degree; and he concluded with moving an amendment to the address.

The manner in which this amendment was supported, and the sentiments uttered by many who were supposed to look up to the minister, deeply wounded the pride of Mr. Pitt, who was unable to conceal his displeasure and chagrin: he rose early in the debate, and addressed himself earnestly and pathetically to the new opposition. 'The reasons,' he observed, 'that have induced gentlemen to dissent from the prosecution of the war, seem to have possessed a considerable influence on the manner in which they speak of its justice and necessity at the commencement; and their language is fainter and feebler than I had reason to expect. Contending, as these gentlemen and I did, with the new and monstrous system of cruelty, anarchy, and impiety, against those whose principles trampled on civilised society, religion, and law;—contending, I say, with such a system,—I could not have entertained the slightest expectation, that from them would have proceeded such an amendment. It has pleased an inscrutable Providence, that this power of France should trample over every thing that has been opposed to it; but let us not therefore fall without making any efforts to resist it; let us not sink without measuring its strength.' Notwithstanding this defection from his ranks, the sentiments of Mr. Pitt prevailed; and the address was carried by a large majority.

END OF VOL. XVII.

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